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THE Naked Truth. OR, THE TRUE STATE OF THE Primitive Church.

BY AN

Humble Moderator.

Zach. 8. 19. *Love the Truth and Peace.*
Gal. 4. 16. *Am I therefore become your Enemy, because I tell you the truth?*

Printed in the Year, 1675.

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An Humble Petition to the Right Honourable

the Lords and Commons Aſſembled in Parliament.

My Lords and noble Gentlemen, You have fully expreſſed your Zeal to God and his Church in making Laws for Unity in Faith, and Uniformity in Diſcipline: for, as our Saviour ſaid, *A Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand*; ſo the ſame may certainly be ſaid of a Church, the reaſon being the ſame for both: And I call the Searcher of all hearts, the God of life and death, to witneſs, that I would moſt readily, yea moſt joyfully ſacrifice all I have in this world, my life and all, that all *Non-Conformiſts* were reduced to our Church. But it falls out moſt ſadly that your Laws have not the deſired effect, our Church is more and more divided; ſuch is the perverſe nature of man, *Niti in Vetitum*, obſtinately to oppoſe Authority, eſpecially when they can pretend the colour of Religion and Conſcience; this carries ſo great an applauſe among the Vulgar (ſtill envious at Superiors) that it is, as it were, Nuts to an Ape, ſweeter to them than any other thing this world affords: for the enjoyment of this they will endure any thing, impriſonment, loſs of goods, yea ſometime of life alſo. And this is it which mainly nouriſhes our Diviſions, gives great advantage to the growth of Popery, and threatens the total ruine of our Church. Many who were formerly very zealous for our Church, ſeeing theſe our ſad diviſions, and not ſeeing thoſe of the Roman-Church, nor their groſs Superſtitions (which their Prieſts conceal till they have got men faſt) are eaſily ſeduced by their pretended Unity, and daily fall from us. This makes my heart to bleed, and my ſoul with anguiſh ready to expire, rather than live to ſee that diſmal day of relapſe into their manifold Idolatries. Wherefore I humbled my Soul before God in faſting and prayer, begging dayly the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit, to direct me to ſome healing Salve for theſe our bleeding Wounds: and therefore I have ſome reaſon to believe, that what is contained in theſe following Papers, comes from the great goodneſs of God, who never fails thoſe who ſeek him in humility and ſincerity both, which I am confident I have done; and this I am ſure of, that no Worldly deſigns have moved me to this, but have often

tempted me to give it over; I am also sure, that there is nothing contained therein, which is contrary to the known Laws of the Land: in this only I confess I have transgressed; in putting it forth without licence, and for this I beg of God and you, as *Naaman* did of *Elisha*, *In this thing the Lord and you pardon your Servant*; and I hope you will say unto me as *Elisha* did unto *Naaman*, *Go in peace*; and I farther hope this shall not cast such a prejudice upon it, as to make you cast it by, or read it with disgust. I do not expect you should approve any thing upon the account of my seeking God in this, but upon my Reasons alledged; nor do I expect that upon my Reasons you should approve all: yet I beseech you seriously consider all, and God of his infinite goodness direct you to that which may make for the Unity of our Church, by yielding to weak ones (if not wilful Ones also) as far as your Reason and Conscience will permit: sure you cannot so loath all condescention, as not to loath more, and detest Papal confusion, which certainly comes on apace by our division; and of two evils, both Reason and Religion require us to chuse the less; now doubtless you cannot think condescention (if evil at all, sure not) so evil as Papal Idolatry, and that Papistry is Idolatry, is so clearly proved by our Learned Dr. *Stillingfleet*, as it were lost labour to say more of it. Condescention may seem in some respects imprudent, but whether in this conjuncture of affairs imprudent, I beseech you again consider well. The Wisest men have changed their Counsels and Resolves upon second thoughts, much more upon experience, and approaching evils not at first discovered. It is a common thing with Princes when they find their main enemies power encrease much, to make peace with lesser enemies, on conditions never before to be endured; Self-preservation being the prime principle in all Creatures rational and irrational, springing from Nature it self, it should in nature and reason over-ballance any other consideration; and whatever is done to this end, if not sinfully done, must needs be wisely done. I most humbly beseech the All-wise God, and sole giver of wisdom, to pour down his Holy and Wise Spirit upon you. *Amen.*

To

To the READER.

CHriſtian Reader, *ſo I term you, hoping you have in ſome meaſure the Spirit of Chriſt, and deſire it more, the ſpirit of meekneſs, humility, charity, not to cenſure my errors, and enveigh againſt them, but to pity and endeavour to rectifie them, if you find any; and I aſſure you in the word of a Chriſtian, I ſhall be far more ready to recant, than to vent an error: If you be not thus Chriſtianly diſpoſed, I earneſtly beſeech you read no furtner, for I am ſure you will be diſpleas'd with it: and can you think it wiſdom to run your ſelf into diſpleaſure? enjoy your preſent quiet, and let me reſt. But if you be ſo Chriſtianly diſpoſed as I mentioned, then I as earneſtly beg of you to proceed, to diſcover my errors and amend them. But perchance you will ask, who I am, why did I not tell you, by putting my name to this Pamphlet? I will ingenuouſly confeſs the cauſe. I am a weak man, of great Paſſions, not able to bear Commendations or Reproach; my ſmall ability puts me out of danger of the firſt, but in great fear of the later. Why then was I ſo forward to publiſh my weakneſs? to have it cured; yet truly I have not been very forward, for it is now above two years ſince I had theſe thoughts, in which time I have read and conferred all I could to diſcover if I were in an error, but for all I yet could meet with, do not find it ſo, but hope all I ſay is truth, and that it may be uſeful to the Publique, in this preſent conjuncture of affairs. Therefore I proceed, and in the next place moſt humbly beſeech all that read this, to lay aſide all bias of intereſt or education, both are very great, I am ſure I found it ſo very long before I could maſter them, and that of education moſt difficult; were it not ſo, there could not be that difference of opinion in Chriſtian Religion, all allowing the Bible for the Rule of Faith, the Papiſts themſelves do not reject it, but add to it the authority of the Church. I verily believe there are thouſands of* Papiſts, Lutherans Calviniſts, *both Learned and Religious, who would lay down their lives for the truth they profeſs, and yet are divided in opinion meerly by education, having in their youth ſo imprinted their own opinions in their mind, as you may ſooner ſeparate their body than their opinion from their Soul. Nay, I have heard that among the* Turks *there are many wiſe and moderate perſons that are as zealous to maintain their ridiculous* Alcaron *as we our* Bible; *which cannot proceed from any thing but the ſtrong bias of education, which ſo wheels about and intoxicates their brain. And to ſay ſomewhat more particular of our own Nation here, Thoſe that have been educated in that way as to ſit at the Communion, and baptize their Children without the Croſs, had rather omit theſe Sacraments than uſe kneeling or the Croſs; and thoſe that have been educated in kneeling and croſſing, though they acknowledg they are meer Ceremonies indifferent, yet had rather omit the Sacraments, than omit the Ceremonies juſt as if a man had rather ſtarve than eat bread baked in a Pan, becauſe he hath uſed bread baked in an Oven. So that Religion in many is really but their humor, fancy paſſeth for reaſon, and*

cuſtome

cuſtome is more prevalent than any argument. This is the thing which makes me fear I ſhall meet with very few that will calmly and indifferently conſider what I write, but will preſently ſtartle at it as new and croſs to their Genius, or to their intereſt or their reputation, which they value above all, I mean the eſteem and kindneſs of their beſt friends and acquaintance, whoſe taunts and reproach they cannot bear; but I humbly beſeech them to pauſe a while, and lay it by till the paſſion be over, 'till they have mattered all theſe difficulties. I beſeech them to ſet before their eyes the beauty, the honour, the ſtedfaſtneſs of Truth, the comfort, the delight, the everlaſting felicity of a clear and rectified Conſcience; then reſume it and conſider again. But they cry Piſh, 'tis not worth it, 'tis a ridiculous toy, and ſavours ſomething of the Sectarian: I grant there are ſome things among the Sectarians I approve of, I will not reject and condemn any truth uttered, or any good action performed though ſaid and done by the Devil. I conſider the things, and if good, embrace them, whoever utters them, though I deteſt his errors in other things; You will ſay the ſame? then I beſeech you do the ſame; conſider what I ſay ſimply in it ſelf, whether the Papiſts or Anabaptiſts ſay the ſame, it matters not; I hope you will not reject Chriſt becauſe they both profeſs him. But if after all your ſerious patient, unbiaſt conſideration you find it an erroneous contemptible Pamphlet, yet contemn not the perſon that wrote it in the ſincerity of his heart, leſt you receive the ſame meaſure again from Chriſt, who hath aſſured us, that ſhall be his rule, to meet unto us the like. Chriſt died for the ſalvation of my poor ſoul as well as yours, contemn it not therefore, but endeavour to rectifie it; if God hath given you more knowledg and wiſdome than me, be not high-minded but fear, and let him that ſtands take heed leſt he fall. *Thus I pray for you, do you the like for me, and however we differ in Opinion, let us accord in Charity, and in Chriſt Jeſus the Redeemer of us all.* Amen.

Concerning

Concerning Articles of Faith.

THat which we commonly call the Apoſtles Creed, if it were not Compoſed by them, yet certainly by Primitive and Apoſtolick Men, and propoſed as the Summe of Chriſtian Faith, the Summe total neceſſary to Salvation; It can't be ſuppoſed they left out any thing which they thought neceſſary to Salvation, they might as well have omitted half or all: as one Commandment broken is the ſame in effect with all, ſo one neceſſary Principle of Faith denyed, Cancels all, and ſhuts outfrom Heaven. When I ſpeak of believing the Apoſtles Creed, I do not mean, that we believe all there contained with a Divine Faith becauſe it is there contained, for we have no aſſurance that the Apoſtles Compoſed that Creed; but we are ſure all that is in that Creed is evident in Scripture to any common underſtanding; therefore we believe all with a Divine Faith. But I mention this Creed onely, to ſhew that the Primitive Church received this as the ſum total of Faith neceſſary to Salvation; why not now? Is the ſtate of Salvation altered? If it be compleat, what needs any other Article? You would have men improve in Faith, ſo would I, but rather *intenſivè* than *extenſivè*, to confirm it rather than enlarge it: One ſound grain of Muſtard-ſeed is better than a buſhel of unſound chaffie ſtuff. 'Tis good to know all Goſpel-Truths, and to believe them, no doubt of that; but the Queſtion is not what is good, but what is neceſſary. I pray remember the Treaſurer to *Candace*, Queen of *Ethiopia*, whom *Philip* Inſtructed in the Faith; his time of Catechiſing was very ſhort, and ſoon proceeded to Baptiſm. But *Philip* firſt required a Confeſſion of his Faith, and the Eunuch made it, and I beſeech you Obſerve it; *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God*: and ſtraitway he was Baptized. How? no more than this? No more; this little grain of Faith being ſound, believed with all his heart, purchaſed the Kingdom of Heaven: Had he believed the whole Goſpel with half his heart, it had been of leſs value in the ſight of God; 'tis not the Quantity, but the Quality of our Faith God requireth. But ſure the Eunuch was more fully Inſtructed; it may be you are ſure of it, but I could never yet meet with any aſſurance of it, nor any great probability of it; I am ſure he ſaw *Philip* no more, and I am ſure *Philip* required no more, but

baptized him on this, and had the Eunuch departed this Life in the same instant that *Philip* parted from him, I believe I have better assurance that this faith would have saved the Eunuch, than any Man hath that he ever was taught more: See 1 *John* 4.2. *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is of God*: but the more the better still I grant, though no more necessary. Hast thou more Faith, have it to thy self before God, *happy is he who condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth*; happy is he who is thankful to God for having received much, and despiseth not him that hath received little: God dispenseth his gifts and graces according to his free Will and Pleasure, nor doth he require more of any Man than according to the proportion he hath given, no more should we.

Nothing hath caused more mischief in the Church than the establishing new and many Articles of Faith, and requiring all to assent unto them. I am willing to believe that zealous men endeavoured this with pious intentions to promote that which they conceived Truth; but by imposing it on the dissenters, caused furious Warrs, and lamentable Blood-shed among Christians, Brother Fighting against Brother, and Murthering each other. Can there be any thing more irrational than to endeavour to promote the truth of the Gospel contrary to the Laws of the Gospel? to break an evident Commandment to establish a doubtful Truth? I say, doubtful to him on whom it is imposed, though seeming clear to him that imposes it. If it were fully express'd in Scripture-words, there would need no new Expression, no new Article; if it be not fully exprest in Scripture, but deduc'd from Scripture-Expressions, then what one Man thinks clearly deduc'd, another may think not so; I mean, not another ignorant and weak, but as learned, and as able. What more common than in Divinity and Philosophy Schools? One crys, this is a clear Demonstration; another crys, no such matter, but flatly denies it. Mens understandings are as various as their Speech or their Countenance, otherwise it were impossible there should be so many understanding and moderate, yea, and conscientious Men also, *Papists*, *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, all in such Opposition one against another, all believing Scripture, yet so differing in the deductions from Scripture. Truly I think him very defective in Charity, however he abound in Faith, who thinks all *Papists* or *Lutherans*, or *Calvinists* malitiously or wilfully blind.

As for my part, I think nothing can be more clearly deduc'd from Scripture, nothing more fully express'd in Scripture, nothing more sutable to Natural Reason, than that no Man should be forc'd to believe, for no Man can be forc'd to believe; you may force a Man to say this or that, but not to believe it. First, as to Reason. If you bring a Man an evident Demonstration, and he hath a Brain to understand your Demonstration, he can't but assent to it. If you hold a clear Printed Book with a clear Candle to a Man of clear Eyes and able to read, he will certainly read; but if the Print be not clear, or the Candle or his Sight not clear, or he not Learned to read, can your force make him read?

read? And juſt ſo it is with our underſtanding, which is the eye of our Soul, and a demonſtration being as a candle to give light; if then your demonſtration or deduction, or his underſtanding be not clear, or he not learned, you may with a club daſh out his brains, but never cleer them. He then that believes the Scripture, can't but believe what you cleerly demonſtrate from Scripture, if he hath cleer brains; if he hath not, your force may puzle and pudle his brains more by the paſſion of anger and hatred, make him abhor you and your arguments, but never lovingly embrace you or them: and thus you may hazard his Soul by hatred, and your own Soul alſo by provoking him to it, but never ſave his Soul by a true belief. But perchance you will conclude, he doth not believe the Scripture, becauſe he doth not believe your arguments from Scripture; (a ſtrange concluſion) but what then? would you, can you force him to believe the Scripture? can you drive faith like a nail into his head or heart with a hammer? nay, 'tis not in a mans own power to make himſelf believe any thing farther then his reaſon ſhews him, much leſs divine things; this is the peculiar work of Grace, and if Faith be the gift of God, your Argument cannot give it, nor your Hammer force it; Arguments may be good Inducements, and if right, will prevail with thoſe to believe whom God hath ordained to Eternal Life, but no other; Preaching the Word is the means God himſelf hath appointed, but as for force, I can't find in the Goſpel either commandment or countenance given for it. If the Scripture command to ſpeak the truth in love, to inſtruct our Brother in the ſpirit of meekneſs, if we are to pray and beſeech him to receive the grace of God, can any thing be more contrary to Scripture Rule, then force and violence? to what purpoſe then is force, ſince it cannot make him believe the Goſpel; and if he doth believe the Goſpel, he will, I am ſure, he cannot chuſe but believe what you cleerly ſhew him is contained there (ſuppoſing his brain to be clear); and I am alſo ſure, if he believe what is cleerly contained, he need not believe any thing elſe. The Scripture is our Rule of Faith compleat and full, the *Scripture* it ſelf tells us ſo, *John* 20. 31. *Theſe things are written that you might believe, and believing ye might have life*; and our *Saviour* tells us, *That in them we have Eternal Life*, *John* 5. 39. and the 2d. *Tim.* 3. 15. St. *Paul* tells us, *The Scriptures are able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; *all Scripture is given by inſpiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works*. And I beſeech all men further to conſider what is ſaid *Deut.* 12. 32. *Thou ſhalt not add thereto nor diminiſh from it*; and likewiſe how they will avoid the Curſe in the laſt of the *Revelation*, if they add to the words there written; and ſurely 'tis the ſame Crime to add to any other Book of *Scripture*. If it be anſwered, They do not require us to believe it to be *Scripture*. I reply, They require men to believe it as *Scripture*, with Divine Faith, which is as bad, they make their own words equal with Gods word; or if they ſay, they require not Divine Faith, then I am ſure it is no matter of Salvation whether I believe

it or no, humane Faith cannot ſave. Thus you ſee how impertinent, how irrational, how impious it is, to require a man to believe any thing more than is cleerly contained in Scripture; and if it be cleerly contained there, he that believes Scripture and ſees it cleerly contained there, can't but believe it; if he do not ſee it cleerly contained there, you can't force either his ſight or his Faith. Your force may make him blinder, but never ſee cleerer; may make him an Hypocrite, no true Convert.

Again, I deſire all men ſoberly to conſider. Are not the prime and moſt neceſſary Principles of Faith, the Trinity, three Perſons and one God, the Incarnation of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame perſon to be God and Man, the Reſurrection of the Dead, that we ſhall riſe with the ſame Body, when one body may be eaten and converted into ſeveral bodies, and ſuch like: Are they not things far above the higheſt reaſon and ſharpeſt underſtanding that ever had Man; yet we believe them, becauſe God (who cannot lye) hath declared them: is it not then a ſtrange thing for any man to take upon him to declare one tittle more of them then God hath declared, ſeeing we underſtand not what is declared; I mean we have no comprehenſive knowledge of the matter declared, but only a believing knowledge, our Faith not our Reaſon reaches it: the Apoſtles by the Scriptures teach us this, not the Schooles by Syllogiſmes. If then our Reaſon underſtands not what is declared, How can we by Reaſon make any deduction by way of Argument from that which we underſtand not? As for Example. Some hold, That the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from the Father and the Son; ſome, that he proceeds from the Father by the Son. I pray, Doth any man underſtand how the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from the Father, from the Son, or by the Son? no certainly, how then can he affirm or believe a tittle more of the Holy Ghoſt than the Holy Ghoſt hath declared? Seeing, as I ſaid, He underſtands not at all what is declared. Diſcourſe muſt be of things intelligible, though Faith believes things not intelligible. Can any man prove, that rotation and circulation are all one, who underſtands not what rotation or circulation is? the like may be ſaid of proceſſion or miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, The Scripture plainly tells, That the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from the Father, and that he is ſent by the Father, that he is ſent alſo by the Son, but whether he proceeds from the Son or by the Son, the Scripture is ſilent, and I am therefore ignorant, having no knowledge at all of any Divine Myſteries but from the Scriptures. I grant, That by rational deductions and humane way of argumenting, 'tis probable, that the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from the Son as from the Father; but if in divine matters we once give way to humane deductions, a cunning Sophiſter may ſoon lead a weak Diſputant into many Errours. By humane deduction you may infer, that the Son is inferiour to the Father as begotten by him, the Holy Ghoſt inferiour to both, being ſent by both; with us the leſs is ſent by the greater; by humane deduction from three diſtinct perſons you may prove three diſtinct ſubſtances; I hope you will make no ſuch inferences in the Divine Perſons. Again, What a buſineſs have the School-Men made about theſe words of our Saviour; *This is my Body*: with

their

their *prædicatum*, and *ſubjectum*, and *copula*, and *individuum vagum*, in the pronoun *This*. Innumerable are their intricate Impertinencies in this matter, and in their concluſions, The Papiſts hold Chriſt to be preſent in the Sacrament *Tranſubſtantialiter*; the *Lutherans*, *Conſubſtantialiter*; the *Calviniſts*, *Sacramentaliter*; and yet all confeſs they underſtand none of theſe ways; as St. *Paul* ſaith, *Deſiring to be Teachers they underſtand not what they ſay, neither whereof they affirm*, 1 Tim. 1. 7. Had the Scripture affirmed any of theſe wayes, we ought to have ſubmitted our Reaſon in things above Reaſon though we underſtand them not, and 'tis reaſonable ſo to do; but to go about to prove by reaſon what is above reaſon, is wonderful; and to diſcourſe of what we underſtand not, is doubtleſs a ſpice of madneſs, and the concluſions we draw from ſuch diſcourſes, muſt needs be very dangerous, we following the *ignem fatuum*, the uncertain light of humane reaſon in Divine matters ſo totally beyond our reach: Wherefore we have no other ſafe way to ſpeak of Divine matters but in Scripture Language, *ipſiſſimis verbis*, with the very ſame words, according to that, 2 Tim. 1. 13. *Hold faſt the form of ſound words which thou haſt heard of me in Faith*: Mark, *Hold faſt* not onely the matter of Faith, but *the form of ſound words*, theſe are ſafe; humane words in Divine and high Myſteries are dangerous; Man can no more ſet them forth in humane words, than expreſs the Divine ſubſtance by humane painting, 'tis the ſole work of the Holy Ghoſt, who is alſo Divine.

There hath not been a greater plague to Chriſtian Religion than School-Divinity, where men take upon them the liberty to propoſe new Queſtions, make nice diſtinctions and raſh concluſions of Divine matters, toſſing them up and down with their Tongues like Tennis Balls; and from hence proceed all the dangerous Hereſies, and cruel Bickerings about them, falling from words to blows. The firſt Divinity School we read of, was ſet up at *Alexandria* by *Pantænus*, and from thence ſoon after ſprang forth that damnable Hæreſie of the *Arrians*, which over-ran all Chriſtendome, and was the cauſe of deſtruction to many Millions of Chriſtians both Body and Soul. The Hæreſies before this were ſo groſs and ſenſual, that none took them up but diſſolute or frantick people, and ſoon vaniſh't; but after this School ſubtile way of arguing was brought into Chriſtianity, Hæreſie grew more refined, and ſo ſubtill, that the plain and Pious Fathers of the Church knew not how to lay hold of it and repreſs it, the School diſtinctions and evaſions quite baffled them: and theſe Sophiſters, proud of their conqueſt, triumphed and carried away a ſpecious appearance of Truth as well as Learning, (or rather cunning) inſomuch that many godly perſons were alſo deluded and fell in unto them, and many of their Hæreſies continue unto this day. This great bane of the Church took it's riſe from hence; Many of the Primitive Doctors and Fathers being converted from Heatheniſme, and having by long and great Induſtry acquired much knowledge in natural Philoſophy, Antiquity, Hiſtory, and ſubtil Logick or Sophiſtry, were very unwilling to abandon quite theſe their long ſtudied and dearly

dearly belov'd Sciences, (falſly ſo called) and therefore tranſlated them into Chriſtianity, applying their School terms, diſtinctions, Syllogiſmes, &c. to Divine matters; intending perchance, through indiſcreet zeal, to illuſtrate and imbelliſh Chriſtian knowledge with ſuch artificial forms and figures, but rather defaced and ſpoyled it; which the wiſdome of St. *Paul* well foreſaw, and therefore fore-warned us of it, *Col.* 2. 8. *Beware leſt any man ſpoyl you through Philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Chriſt.* I humbly conceive it nad been far better for them, and all Chriſtendome, had they determined with St. *Paul*, *To know nothing but Chriſt and him Crucified*; and not to intermingle mans Wiſdome and excellency of ſpeech with Divine Knowledge and Scripture Doctrine, which is to be taught *by the demonſtration of the Spirit and of power*, as is ſet forth 1 *Cor.* 2. not with Logical Syllogiſms and Sophiſtical Enthymems; for as the wiſdome of God was fooliſhneſs to the *Greeks* and Gentiles, ſo the wiſdome of the Greeks and Gentiles was fooliſhneſs to God, and deſtruction to his Church; who by the fooliſhneſs of preaching had overcome all their wiſdome, and captivated their underſtandings in obedience to the Faith. But when the Chriſtian Doctors left this plain and ſimple way of preaching, and fell to cunning diſputing, introducing new forms of ſpeech and nice expreſſions of their own coyning, ſome approving, ſome oppoſing them, great Diſcords, Warrs and Confuſions ſoon followed. Had that moſt Prudent and moſt Pious *Conſtantine* the firſt and beſt of Chriſtian Emperours, had he purſued his own intentions to ſuppreſs all diſputes and all new queſtions of God the Son, both *Homoouſian* and *Homoiouſion*, and commanded all to acquieſce in the very Scripture expreſſions without any addition, I am confident the *Arrian* Hereſie had ſoon expired; but by continual diſputation the heat of Paſſion was raiſed, and the matter purſued with far more violence, which at length grew into rancour and malice irreconcileable: For ſome Godly Biſhops (I humbly conceive more zealous than diſcreet) would not reſt ſatisfied unleſs the *Arrians* were forced either to ſubſcribe to the new word *Homoouſian*, or to quit their Livings; and this cauſed that great Perſecution againſt the Orthodox, where the *Arrians* prevailed; whereas by ſilence impoſed on all parties, the malice, rancour, perſecution, warr, all had been prevented, and *the Truth ſpoken in love* would at length moſt probably have prevailed: For, was not the Goſpel at firſt planted this way? preaching and praying men to receive it, by this way of weakneſs it prevailed; for *the weak things of God are ſtronger then men.* But when men will be wiſer then God, and in their fooliſh wiſdome think it fit to adde their ſtrength to Gods weakneſs, as a ſpeedier and ſurer way to eſtabliſh the Truth, God to convince them of their folly, ſuffers that ſtrong man the Enemy of the Goſpel (whom none but his Almighty Arm can bind and maſter) to come and ſow his tares of diviſion which ſoon over-runs the good ſeed of the Church, and brings all to confuſion.

But

But what then? would I have all heretical Opinions broach'd and ſpread abroad without any controul? Are not Princes and Magiſtrates to be Nurſing Fathers unto the Church? muſt they not adde the Power of the Sword to that of the Word? *Not hold the Sword in vain, but for the puniſhment of evil Doers*, &c? All this I grant, and deſire as much as any man, that both Prince and Paſtor would hold faſt *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, fully declared and contained in Scripture; let them ſuffer no new Doctrine to be ſet on foot, certainly ſuperfluous (the Scripture being allſufficient) and probably dangerous, as being of Man, and not of God, who having given us a compleat Rule of Faith and Life by his Prophets, Apoſtles, and his only Son, we have no reaſon to believe any New Doctrine proceeds from him; therefore St. *Paul* is very bo'd, and cryeth out, *If an Angel from Heaven Preach unto you any other Goſpel than is already preached, let him be accurſed.* The Magiſtrate then is to countenance and protect the Paſtor preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt, to ſilence, oppoſe, puniſh all that Preach any thing contrary, or not cleerly contained in the Goſpel. Hereſies never at firſt appear in their own natural ſhape, but diſguiſed with ſpecious pretences drawn from ſome obſcure places of Scripture, capable of various Interpretations, and thus having gotten footing, by degrees they lay aſide their Diſguiſes, and march on bare-fac'd. Therefore both Paſtor and Magiſtrate ought to be very watchfull, and oppoſe all beginnings ever ſo ſpecious, as dangerous, or at leaſt ſuperfluous, as I ſaid. Let the Paſtors at firſt endeavour by plain and ſound Doctrine to ſtop the mouths of Gainſayers; but if theſe turbulent ſpirits will not be ſtop't, neither by Admonitions nor Entreaties, then let the Paſtors proceed to the Power of the Keyes; which, were it uſed with that Gravity and Severity as it was in the Primitive times, would have great effect; that is, were it uſed in a ſolemn Aſſembly, by the Reverend Biſhop and his Clergy, (not by Lay-Chancellours and their Surrogates) and the perſon excommunicated and ſhut out of the Church, were likewiſe excluded from all Converſation and Commerce, every one ſhunning his company as a perſon infected with the Plague (ſo it was of old, and ſo it ought to be now, and ſo it would be now, if men made any Conſcience of their wayes) this I am confident would reduce many a one: But if after this any perſevere in their perverſneſs, then the Magiſtrate may doubtleſs by his Power, uſed with Chriſtian moderation, endeavour to ſtop the ſpreading of the Contagion, and do what in wiſdom he thinks meet to preſerve the purity and peace of Church and State, urging againſt them that Scripture, *Haſt thou Faith, have it to thy ſelf before God*, *Rom.* 14. 22. Or that, *Give none offence neither to the Jew nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. Or that, *Gal.* 5. 12. *I would they were even cut off that trouble you.* *St. Paul* was not here in jeaſt but in great earneſt, as appears by his continued fervency all along this Epiſtle; and doubtleſs he means not here a cutting off from the Church by way of Excommunication, for that was in his power to do; why then ſhould he wiſh it? nay, they had cut themſelves off from the Church before; certainly then he means a cutting off by the Civil Power,

Power, which then was Heathen, and therefore St. *Paul* would not have it made uſe of by Chriſtians; for he would not allow them to appeal to unbelieving Magiſtrates, no not in Civil things, 1 *Cor.* 6. much leſs in *S*piritual things. Wherefore when St. *Paul* wiſhes they were cut off, he wiſhes there were a fitting Power, that is, a Chriſtian Magiſtrate to puniſh or baniſh thoſe that trouble the Church of Chriſt with Doctrines apparently contrary to the cleer Text, and ſuch as are deſtructive to Chriſtianity; I dare go no farther. But as for thoſe who keep their erroneous Opinions to themſelves, who neither publiſh nor practiſe any thing to the diſturbance of the Church or State, but onely refuſe to conform to the Churches eſtabliſhed Doctrine or Diſcipline, pardon me if I ſay, that really I cannot find any warrant, or ſo much as any hint from the Goſpel, to uſe any Force to compell them; and from Reaſon ſure there is no Motive to uſe Force; becauſe, as I ſhewed before, Force can't make a man believe your Doctrine, but onely as an Hypocrite, Profeſs what he believes not.

I know full well there is a common Objection againſt this, taken from St. *Auſtin*, who was long of my Opinion, but ſeems to be altered on this occaſion. Some Hereticks *Donatiſts*, came to him in his latter dayes, and gave thanks, that the Civil Power was made uſe of to reſtrain them; confeſſing, that was the Means which brought them to conſider more calmly their own former extravagant Opinions, and ſo brought them home to the true Church. This Objection is eaſily anſwered. Firſt, the *Donatiſts* are well known to have been a Sect, not only erroneous in Judgment, but very turbulent in Behaviour, alwayes in ſeditious practices; and in that caſe I ſhew'd before how the Civil Magiſtrate may proceed to Puniſhment; but our caſe is not in repreſſing ſeditious practiſes, but enforceing a Confeſſion of Faith, quite of another nature. Then ſecondly, to anſwer more particularly this ſtory, I ſuppoſe there is no man ſuch a ſtranger to the world, as to be ignorant that there are Hypocrites in it; and ſuch (for ought we know) theſe ſeeming converted *Donatiſts* might be, who for love of this World more than for love of the Truth, forſook their heretical Profeſſion, though not their Opinion; who, conſcious to themſelves of their own diſſimulation, and deſirous to get favour with St. *Auſtin*, a Perſon of great Veneration and Authority with all, related unto him this ſpecious Story, which St. *Auſtin*'s great Charity was apt to believe, as St. *Paul* ſaith, *believeth all things*; and from hence concludeth, that it might be lawfull to uſe the Power of the Civil Sword to reduce Hereticks to the Church. But unleſs it can be evidenced that theſe *Donatiſts* Hearts were changed as well as their Profeſſion, (a thing impoſſible to prove) all this proves nothing. Thirdly, Put the Caſe their Hearts were really changed as to matter of Belief, 'tis evident their Hearts were very worldly ſtill, groveling on the Earth, not one ſtep nearer Heaven; our Saviour ſaith, *An evil Tree can't bring forth good Fruit*, and ſure their Heart was evil, which was far more moved for the quiet enjoyment of this Worlds good, than for the bleſſed enjoyment of Chriſt. Fourthly, Though we farther grant, that the pruning of the Magiſtrates Sword did

really

really correct the vitiousness of the Tree, and made it bring forth some good Fruit, yet shall *we do evill, that good may come of it? God forbid*, saith St. *Paul*. Put the case *Malchus* had been converted by St. *Peters* cutting off his Ear, this would not have excused St. *Peters* act, which our Saviour so sharply reproved and threatned with perishing by the Sword, and gave him the reason why he ought not to use the Sword in his cause; *Thinkest thou that I cannot pray unto my Father, and he will presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels?* Canst thou do any thing more prejudicial to the honour of my God-head, than to think I want the help of Man to defend me? And according to this may our Saviour say; Thinkest thou that I cannot pray unto my Father, and he shall give me more than twelve millions of Souls to worship my Name? or canst thou do any thing to eclipse more the power and glory of the Gospel, which I have ordained to be set up by weakness and foolishness of Preaching, and thereby to subdue both the wisdom of the *Greeks*, and the power of the *Gentiles*: As I my self have conquered all Enemies by preaching and suffering, so must my Disciples tread in my steps. And just so we find that the Gospel was most miraculously advanced over all the World by preaching and suffering for it, not by compelling others to it. 'Tis evident that upon preaching of the Gospel, as many as were ordained by God to Eternal Life, believed: and surely those who are not ordained by God to Eternal Life, can never be brought thither by the ordinance or power of Man: Wherefore when the Ministers have preached and prayed, they have performed all they can do, the rest must be left to the Justice or Mercy of God, *who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*; so, that the sharpest Sword in this world shall enter their hard heart no more than an *Adamant*.

All this I say in reference to compelling Men to believe or conform, still reserving to the Magistrate power, according to Scripture, *To punish evill doers* (not evill believers, not who think, but) do publish or do practice something to subvert the Fundamentals of Religion, or disturb the Peace of the State, or injure their Neighbour. God, the only searcher of hearts, reserves unto himself the punishment of evil thoughts, of evil belief, which Man can never have a right cognizance of, for the greatest Professor may be the greatest *Atheist*. But the Magistrate shall conceive he hath sufficient warrant to punish also evil believers, and shall proceed to execution, or on that pretence shall punish true believers; the Scripture is most clear, that the Subject is bound to submit and bear it with all Christian patience, to the loss of Goods, Liberty, or Life, not only patiently to bear it, but to rejoyce in it; and I am sure if he hath any true Religion, any right understanding in him, he will rejoyce on his own behalf, because his *reward is exceeding great*: Therefore whoever under pretence of Religion raises any Tumult, or takes up Armes against the Magistrate

to preſerve himſelf from perſecution, abſolutely declares himſelf, either a ſtark Fool, or a ſtark *Atheiſt*; either he believes there is no ſuch reward, or is mad to reject the opportunity of gaining it; and ſo at the beſt is fit for *Bedlam*, at the worſt for the *Gallowes*; now let him chooſe.

An Appendix to the former Subject.

BEfore I leave this matter of impoſing new Articles of Faith, I deſire to ſpeak a word or two concerning the authority of Councels and Fathers in relation to it.

When the Superſtitions and the Abuſes of the *Popiſh* Church, eſpecially in the matter of *Indulgences* grew ſo very groſs, as not longer to be endured, *Luther*, *Melanchton*, *Oecolompadius*, *Bucer*, & divers others oppoſed them; and coming to diſpute with their Adverſaries about theſe things, the *Popiſh* Doctors having no Scripture for their Errors, quoted ſeveral Fathers and Councils, to give countenance unto them. The *Evangelical Doctors* (ſo called, becauſe they chiefly urged *Evangelium* the *Goſpel* for the defence of their Doctrine) were moſt of them bred up from their Infancy in the *Popiſh* Church, and therein taught even to adore all Councils and Fathers, and (education being of great force to command and awe both the Wil's and Judgments of Men) made them very ſhie and timorous to reject that authority, which they had long reverenced; in modeſty therefore ſome of the *Evangelical Doctors* were content to admit the authority of Fathers and Councils for three or four of the firſt Centuries, ſome admitted five or ſix, whereby they were reduced ſometimes to great ſtreights in their Diſputations: for though neither all nor half the *Popiſh* Errors can be found in the Councils and Fathers of theſe Centuries, yet ſome of them were crept very early into the Church. This Superſtition of the *Croſs* and *Chryſme* were in uſe in the ſecond Century: The *Milenary* Error got footing about that time; the neceſſity of Infants receiving the Bleſſed Sacrament of the Lords Supper came in ſoon after: About the fourth Century there was ſome touches in Oratory Sermons by way of Rhetorical Ejaculations like praying to Saints, but long after came to be formally uſed as now in Churches; and ſo Superſtitions came in ſome at one time, and ſome at another. The *Papiſts* themſelves do not receive all theſe Errors, but reject ſome, as that of the *Milenaries*, and the neceſſity of Infants receiving the Lords Supper. Now I ask firſt the *Papiſts* by what rule they retain ſome of theſe things, and reject others? Secondly, I ask the *Evangelical*, by what rule they ſubmit to the authority of ſome Centuries, and refuſe others? Both will anſwer me, Becauſe they believe ſome to be erroneus ſome to be Orthodox. Whereby 'tis evident that neither ſubmit to the Fathers authority, as comanding their Judgments, but receive their Opinions as agreeing with their Judgments, this is evidently true and clearly rational, and fully agrees with the Rules

given

given by ſome of the Fathers, as St. *Cyprian* and St. *Auſtin*, two as generally and as deſervedly reverenced as any in the Chriſtian Church. St. *Cyprian* tells us, that the very *Præpoſitus* (which we call *Biſhop*) is to be guided by his own reaſon and conſcience, and is reſponſible only to God for his Doctrine. St. *Auſtin* tells us, that he ſubmits to no Doctor of the Church ever ſo learned, ever ſo holy, any further than he proves his doctrine by Scripture or reaſon, and deſires none ſhould do otherwiſe by him; this is plain and rational dealing; had the Evangelical Doctors taken this courſe in the beginning, they had ſaved themſelves from many intricate troubles which their in-bred over-revence to antiquity entangled them in; But ſure they needed not have been ſo ſcrupulous in this matter, ſeeing there is ſcarce any one Father whoſe authority the Papiſts themſelves do not in ſome particular or other reject, though other whiles when he ſpeaks for them, they try it up to that height, as if it were even a matter of damnation not to ſubmit unto it. I ſay not this as if I would have antiquity wholly rejected, by no means but; to conſult the Fathers with great regard as Expoſitors of Scriptures, and attentively obſerve what they ſhew us from thence. I am not of thoſe who admire the great knowledge in divine matters revealed in this later Age of the world, I do not think there are any now ſo likely to diſcover the truth of Goſpel myſteries as thoſe of antient dayes. As for that ſaying, A Pigme ſet on a Giants ſhoulder, may ſee more than the Giant; pardon me if I call it a ſhallow and ſilly fancy, nothing to our purpoſe; for our queſtion is not of ſeeing more, but of the clear diſcerning and judging thoſe things we all ſee, but are in doubt what they mean: if a Pigme and a Giant ſee a Beaſt at a miles diſtance, and are in diſpute whether it be a Horſe or an Oxe, the Pigme ſet on the Giant ſhoulder, is never the nearer diſcerning what it is, which depends on the ſharpneſs of ſight, not the height of his ſhoulders: Now that the antient and holy Fathers of the Church were more ſpiritual, and conſequently ſharper ſighted in ſpiritual things than we carnal creatures of this later age, is evident by their Spiritual holy Lives: *The natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. And how natural, how carnal, how purblind we are, is too too viſible. Beſides, a purblind man near the object, will diſcern it better than a much ſharper ſight at greater diſtance as we are: For if you ask thoſe lofty conceited Pigmes, why they give more credit to the Fathers of the ſecond and third Century, than to thoſe of the ſixth or ſeventh; they anſwer, Becauſe thoſe that lived nearer the dayes of *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, are likelyer to know their minds better than thoſe of remoter and corrupted Ages; the reaſon is good, but mightily confounds thoſe who live at the very foot of the Hill in the valley of darkneſs and all Iniquity, and therefore not ſo likely to diſcern the truth of the doctrine of *Chriſt*, preach't on the top of Mount *Sion*, as thoſe who lived in higher aſcents. Wherefore I ſhall alwayes hearken with due reverence unto what thoſe Primitive Holy Fathers deliver, and the more holy and

more antient, doubtless more to be regarded. And yet seeing that *Irenæus*, and before him *Papias*, held to be a Disciple of St. *John* the *Apostle*, taught the error of the *Millenaries*, rejected now by all the Church, why might not others do so as well as they? and therefore there can be no certainty of their Doctrine farther than they shew us clearly from Scripture, which ought to be our only Rule of Faith, as I shewed before. But in any point of Religion, either of Faith or Discipline, if after diligent and humble search of Scripture, the matter be doubtful, then certainly I would so much reverence antiquity as to embrace what I found approved of by the greater number of antient Fathers; and what I found generally approved by them, though my own judgement did much incline to the contrary, yet I would receive it, unless it appeared to me flatly opposite to Scripture, which we believe to be the Word of God; then it were damnation in me to forsake that, and hearken to the words of Fathers on earth, or Angels coming from Heaven, till they could make me understand their word agreed with Gods Word. I must be saved by Faith in God and *Christ*, and not by faith in Men or Angels. And now I shall be bold to make this assertion; That the Man who reads Scripture humbly and attentively, fasts and prayes to God earnestly, consults his Pastors and Teachers carefully and modestly, and yet after all continues in some error by blind ignorance and mistake of Scripture (if such a thing was, or ever will be suffered by the infinite goodness of God) that Man shall sooner be saved, than he who receives a true opinion from the authority of Men, which he soberly conceives to be contrary to Scripture; for 'tis all one to him, as if it were really so; all things are unclean to him that believes them unclean, so all things are damnable to him that believes them damnable, as he must do who believes them flatly contrary to Scripture. Let no Man count me a libertine in faith, because I would neither compel, nor be compelled to submit to the Doctrines of Men. I trust in God, no Man shall out-go me in zealous *contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, once for all, never to receive any new Doctrine, any other Gospel than that preached by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, herein I am no Libertine; by God's gracious assistance, neither Men nor Angels shall make me recede from one tittle of this, nor to embrace with divine faith one tittle more than this, for doubtless it is far greater Idolatry to believe in Man, than to sacrifice to Man, more to give him my heart, than my hand. And yet notwithstanding all this, no Man is forwarder than my self to receive from others humane doctrine as humane; that is, I believe it is not only possible but probable also, that another may have more natural understanding, more acquired learning than my self, and so may find out that in Scripture, or from Scripture, or by reason, which I cannot do my self; but yet I can have no possible assurance that the Doctrine he delivers to me is absolutely true, because I have assurance that 'tis possible for him to erre, and then I can have no assurance but that he may erre in that very Doctrine he

he now delivers me. There is no Man I ever yet heard or read of, to whom I could more readily ſubmit than to St. *Auſtin*, a Perſon of wonderful ſharpneſs in underſtanding, and yet of great modeſty; no way affecting to take new Opinions, much leſs to impoſe them on others. Now I pray conſider, How can we have aſſurance of any Doctrine he delivers more than another, I mean aſſurance from his own authority or reaſon (what he delivers from Scripture authority is another matter;) we believe St. *Auſtin* erred in ſome things whereof he was moſt confident; he believed it abſolutely neceſſary for Children to receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, as I ſay'd; he believed it a direct hereſie to hold there were any *Antipodes: Lactantius* another great Wit and great Scholar, believed the like, with divers others. Who then can doubt but that they might be miſtaken in other things alſo. Wherefore let God be true, and all Men lyars, in this ſenſe, to deliver lyes materially; that is, falſities for truths.

What I have ſaid of Fathers, muſt certainly hold good of Councels alſo, though ever ſo general, ever ſo Primitive; for this and that Father may, and have erred; ſurely then that and that may alſo erre: I can have no aſſurance in Men, nor can I be ſaved by faith in Men. The general Objection made againſt this, is, The promiſe which *Chriſt* made unto his Church, *That the gates of Hell ſhould not prevail againſt it, and that he would be with the Apoſtles unto the Worlds end.* As for that other ſaying of our Saviour, *He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen and a Publican*, I can't but wonder that Men of any brains or modeſty ſhould ſo groſly abuſe this ſaying, ſpoken of ſeveral differences between Man and Man, to be referred to the termination of the Church; that is, the Congregation of the Faithful, which they uſually and by order ſhould aſſemble in; and refer this to the Church in general in matters of Faith, not in the leaſt pointed at there. Wherefore I paſs this over as very impertinent, and proceed to anſwer the former Objection of more weight, yet no way concluding as they would have it; No Man in the Chriſtian World can more firmly believe than I do, That the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it, and that *Chriſt* will be with his Church unto the end of the World; but I do not believe, nor am I bound by Scripture to believe ſuch Expoſitions as the *Popiſh* Church makes of this place. By what authority doth the *Romiſh* Church challenge to themſelves to be Expoſitors of Scriptures more than other Churches? I find nothing for it in Scripture, which is my Rule of Faith. I proceed then to the buſineſs of general Councels. Whether they may erre in ſome points of Faith; and why not? All the Evangelical Doctors grant the later general Councels have erred; if ſo, why not the former? what promiſe had the former from *Chriſt* more than the later? what period is there ſet in Scripture for their not erring, or what promiſe is there at all for any not to erre? *The gates of Hell ſhall*

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not prevail againſt the Church, I grant, what's this to a General Council? not the thouſand part of the Clergy, not the thouſand thouſand part of the Church, which in Scripture is alwayes put for the whole Body of the Faithful, though of late it be tranſlated into quite another notion, and taken for the Clergy only. But you will ſay a General Councel is the repreſentative of the whole Church: what then? what promiſe is made in Scripture that the repreſentative ſhall not erre? You further urge, If the repreſentative erre, 'tis probable the whole Church will receive their errour. I anſwer, We are now treating of matter of Faith, which muſt not depend on humane probabilities, but Divine certainties; beſides, 'tis not ſo probable the Church will receive the error of the repreſentative. We know the whole Church hath not received a Truth determined by them, much leſs an errour. And I pray, have not Councels been againſt Councels? Put then the caſe, a General Councel ſhould erre in ſome matters, you can't therefore ſay the whole Church hath erred, the gates of Hell have prevailed againſt the Church. I pray conſider, can you truly ſay, the *Great Turk* hath prevailed againſt the Chriſtian Army, becauſe he hath kill'd the thouſand part of it? and yet the greateſt General Councel holds a leſs proportion to the whole Church. But I will grant yet more: Put the caſe the whole Church ſhould deviate into ſome erroneous Superſtitions, had the Devil therefore prevailed againſt it? Can I ſay I have prevailed againſt another Man becauſe I gave him ſome ſlight hurt in his Leg or Thigh? as long as his Head, his Heart, his Arm are whole, he ſtill is able to fight and wound me as bad or worſe; till the Devil can ſo wound the whole body of the Church as to deſtroy the Vitals, the Fundamentals, and make it no Church, the gates of Hell can't be ſaid to have prevailed againſt it. Now God be bleſſed there have continued all along ſeveral Churches as great or greater than the *Roman* Church, which have ſtill maintained in defiance of Satan, *One God the Father of whom are all things, and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things*, and ſeveral other ſound Doctrines of Chriſtianity; how then hath Satan prevailed, when ſo many millions have waged war againſt him, and upheld the Kingdom of God and his *Chriſt?* The Scripture plainly tells us, that in the dayes of *Anti-Chriſt*'s great power, the Church ſhall be driven into the wilderneſs, ſcarce viſible in the world; neither *Pope*, nor Devil hath yet ſo prevailed, but as then *Chriſt* ſhall have, ſo *Chriſt* hath ſtill had a Church warring againſt Satan. Sure no learned *Papiſt* will deny, but that about the ſecond Century, the *Millenaries* were far the greater part of the Church, ſcarce any writing Doctor in thoſe dayes but had this error. Did Satan then prevail? And in St. *Auſtin*'s dayes the neceſſity of Infants receiving the Lords Supper was ſo general, and held ſo neceſſary a Principle, that it was made uſe of to prove the neceſſity of Infant Baptiſm, this Sacrament being to preceede the other: in thoſe dayes a Lanthorn would have been neceſſary to find

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out a Church without this error. Did Satan then prevail? But say you, No General Councel determined those errors; why? because none was called about them; had any been called, who can doubt but that they would have avowed that in the Councel, which they all taught in their Churches: No, the Spirit of God would have preserved them from it: Shew me that promise in Scripture; if Gods Spirit did not preserve them from teaching the whole Church so, I fear the Spirit would not have preserved them more in Council than in Congregation, where all sucking in this error from their Infancy, would hardly have quitted it by a determination in Council. I humbly crave pardon for this bold presumption, being lead into it by the bold assertion of the *Papists*, telling us without warrant how God will preserve their Councils from error, as if they had been of his Privy Council. We are not to search into Gods secret Counsels for what he will permit, or why he permits this or that. I search only into his declared Promises, and with all the search I can possiby make, I can't find any such promise to General Councils as not to erre; no, only that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church to destroy it, which he hath hitherto made good, and I am sure will to the end of the World; but beyond his promise I am not sure of any thing, though it seems ever so rational. God will not endure to be fettered with Sophistical Sophisms, and humane consequences; and therefore I am afraid to wander from his wise and holy Word, and trust to the Doctrine of Men seeming ever so wise, ever so holy; I reverence their Persons, but can't believe in their Doctrine. I am taught to believe only in God, not in the Church, much less in any member or Congregation or Council; but to believe the Holy Catholick Church, that is, that God hath had, now hath, and will have to the Worlds end, a select company of Faithful ones, confessing and serving him; To whom be honour and glory for ever. *Amen.*

Concerning Ceremonies and Church Service.

FIrst as to Ceremonies. I wonder Men of any tolerable discretion should be so eager either for or against them, our salvation no way depending on them, but much hazarded by our contention about them, breaking *Peace*, the principal thing recommended to us by the Gospel of Peace; sure both are very sinful. For my part, I think all Subjects are bound in conscience to conform to the established Ceremonies of that Church, whereof they are Members, unless there be any thing flatly against the Word of God: for to disobey our Superiours is directly against the Word of God: 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lords sake.* And therefore he

he that doth not ſubmit, had need have as clear an evidence out of Scripture, that the thing he rejects is directly contrary to the Word of God, otherwiſe he breaks an evident Commandement to ſatisfy himſelf in a doubtful thing, which without doubt is damnable. St. *Paul* requires one Brother to yield unto another in things indifferent; much more Children to Parents, Subjects to Governours. But no Man that knows this World can expect all Children, all Subjects, will be dutiful and obedient; and therefore as Children are to obey their Parents, ſo Parents ought not to provoke their Children to diſobedience, by impoſing unneceſſary things and very offenſive: Yet if they do impoſe ſuch things, the Children are bound to obey, unleſs the things impoſed be offenſive to God alſo, then they are acquitted, not otherwiſe. But ſtill Parents muſt remember they are to give accompt to God of their commands, as Children are for their obedience: And ſetting this aſide, Nature alone ſhould prompt Parents to ſeek the love of their Children, eſpecially ſpiritual Parents, ſtyl'd the *Miniſters of God, who is love*: Should not they deſire rather to lead the People into the Houſe of God by love, than whip them in by fear; to have their Churches full, rather than empty; to put on ſuch a habit as would invite them in, and not ſuch as will fright them out. What wiſe and loving Father would put on a winding ſheet on his head, to fright his weak and ſimple Child; I ſay this to the chief Rulers of the Church, not to inferior Miniſters, who muſt obſerve the Conſtitutions of the Chief, and the Chief ought to conſider the diſpoſition of inferiours, what will be moſt edifying for them. As the Apoſtles in the beginning of *Chriſtianity* continued to obſerve the not eating of blood, and things ſtrangled, to comply with the *Jews*: ſo the Surplice with other things was wiſely and piouſly retained by the Reformers from *Popery*, when probably many long nouriſhed up in thoſe *Ceremonies*, would not have come in to the Church, had all thoſe been caſt out; but now to be zealous, for them when the People are ſo paſſionate againſt them, ſavours more of paſſion likewiſe in Governours than Religion; as if they had rather ſhew their Authority than their Charity. If they anſwer, That many of their Flock are as zealous for theſe things, as others againſt them, and they had rather gratifie the Obedient Conformers, than the Diſobedient Gain-ſayers: I reply; Firſt, This is no Obedience to conform to ſuch Ordinances of their Superiors as they have a paſſion for; the Superiors in this conform rath r to them, than they to their Superiors: Try their Obedience if they will ſubmit to the taking of theſe things away, and then you may have more reaſon to gratify them; yet you know you are rather to bear with the infirmities of the weak, than pleaſe the ſtrong. Love your Friends moſt, value the Obedient moſt; but love your Enemies alſo, endeavour to gain the diſobedient alſo: The firſt are your dutiful Sons, abide alwayes with you, all that you have is theirs; but yet when the *Prodigal* the ſtray returns, rejoyce and kill the fatted Calf; yea, if he will not return, leave the

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ninety and nine, and go seek that one that is lost. But you have no hopes of gaining him, you believe 'tis not Conscience but Faction, and wilful perverseness keeps him off; Oh do not despair, believe better of him; *Charity hopeth all things, believeth all things.* But you know it is so with him; then pity him the more going headlong into Hell, yield the more to save his Soul from Hell, *overcome evil with good*, fetter him, bind him fast with chains of love, what is stronger then love? it will overcome Schism, Faction, Sedition, any thing; it will overcome God himself, and even force God to withhold him by his merciful and powerful hand; and thus converting this perverse *sinner from the error of his way, you will save his Soul alive and cover the multitude of your sins:* a blessed and joyful work whereat the Angels of Heaven will rejoyce and sing *Alleluja, Amen.* Oh my Fathers! my Fathers! that should Preach and Practice the Gospel of Peace and Love to your Children, vouchsafe at my humble request to read *Rom.* 14. See what great liberty that great Grand-father of the Church allows his Children, and observe in the general how he became all things to all men to gain some; and will not you in some things comply to gain all? will you restrain the liberty of the Gospel to the rigidity of your Discipline to lose some, to lose many, and perchance in the end to loose all, your selves and all. Be pious, be charitable, be prudent, build your Church on a Rock that will endure stormes, and not on the sand of Ceremonies that will both raise stormes and probably overturn your Church e're long. But you will say, If you yield to some dissenters in this, you must as well yield to others in that, and so by degrees abolish all your Ceremonies: I beseech you, Is not the body more then rayment, substance more then Ceremony, will not you quit the later to preserve the former? but you will preserve both, God graut you lose not both. But you will say, This is the way to lose both; first take away Ceremonies, thereby you displease and loose your Friends, and then lye exposed to your Enemies to spoil your Goods. If your Goods be the substance of your Religion, and you preserve your Ceremonies to preserve these, then really my fear of your looſing all is encreas'd; this is a very sandy and dirty foundation, can't hold out against stormes; but if Faith, Hope and Charity be the substance of your Religion, (as I hope it is) these stood firm and encreased in the primitive times, in the greatest stormes, when the whole world of Jews and Gentiles were enemies to the Church, and not one of your Ceremonies in the Church to preserve it: the simple naked Truth without any Surplice to cover it, without any Ecclesiastical Policy to maintain it, overcome all, and so would do now, did we trust to that and the Defender of it. Perchance I appear a great Enemy to the Surplice so often naming that, I confess I am, would you know why? not that I dislike, but in my own Judgment much approve a pure white Robe on the Ministers shoulders, to put him in mind what purity becomes a Minister of the Gospel. But such dirty nasty Surplices as most of them wear, and

especially the singers in Cathedrals (where they should be most decent) is rather an intimation of their durty lives, and have given my Stomack such a surfet of them, as I have almost an aversness to all: and I am confident had not this decent habit been so undecently abused, it had never been so generally loathed.

I will name another Ceremony which gives great offence, with greater reason, The bowing towards the Altar, which in my own judgment I allow and practice in some measure, when I come into such congregations as generally use it, avoiding still to give offence to any as far as I may with a safe conscience. I affirm 'tis a very fitting thing to shew reverence in the House of God, and to shew it by bowing as well as any other means, and to bow that way as well as any other way, and in bowing, if the congregation did it to the South or West, I should as readily conform to that. But you will say the primitive Christians, as we read, did generally bow towards the East (the primitive Christians did so I grant, but not the prime Primitive) what then? is this any obligation on us now? the Primitive did also use Chrysme or consecrated Oyl, yet we retain it not; it grew into an abuse, therefore left off, so hath this bowing towards the Altar by the Papists, supposing Christ corporally present there: and truly many of our Church men, give great suspition to the people that they also believe some such thing, otherwise pray answer me; when a Minister at his entring into the Church hath bowed to shew his reverence in the House of God and when he ascends up to the Altar bows again, to shew some particular reverence in that place where that blessed Sacrament is consecrated (let this pass for good also, Though something may be said against it) yet I pray tell me, why the Reader passing from one side of the Church to the other, and the Minister passing from one end of the Altar to the other bows again? Surely in reverence to the King of Kings he supposes there sitting, who can imagine any other cause of his homage? and yet I verily believe this is not the cause, but meerly a causeless custome taken up one from another (the common beginning of all superstitions) having no reason for it, but much against it, giving thereby great scandal to weak ones, and ground of Slander to malicious ones, who lay hold on any occasions to accuse them of Papistry; for certainly 'tis done with little or no reason, or with a great deal of Superstition.

Now as to that grand debated Ceremony of kneeling at the Lords Supper I think there is no reason to condemn those that use it, nor much reason to press it on those that disuse it. Why? Are we not to perform this great act of devotion with all possible reverence? I grant it, but is this to be expresst altogether in the outward posture of the body? if so, then your oppossers thus retort it upon you: If outward humility be the thing you contend for, you ought to shew it to your God in the humblest way, and that is by prostrating rather then kneeling; but if inward Humility, sure that consists

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chiefly in obedience to what Chriſt commanded, and to do it as he practiſed it, who can doubt but this is the moſt perfect obedience? and you know when our Saviour inſtituted this bleſſed Sacrament, he gave this command in the cloſe, Do this in remembrance of me; and ſure he remembers our Saviour beſt who doth every thing as he did, both in Subſtance and Ceremony, and ſo we find the primitive Chriſtians did, obſerving alſo to receive it at Supper, as our Saviour did; but when this grew into a ſinful abuſe, the ceremony was altered, to preſerve the ſubſtance in more purity: ſo was kneeling abuſed by the Papiſts and turned into great Superſtition, why not therefore changed in like manner. But you kneel without any ſuperſtition, you do not adore the Elements on the Table, as the Papiſts do, but *Chriſt* in Heaven. And ſo this man receives ſitting and at ſupper without any irreverence, he doth it ſo meerly in obedience to *Chriſt*'s command, both in ceremony and ſubſtance, *Do this in remembrance of me.* But you do not conceive *Chriſt*'s command extended to the Ceremonies, but only to the ſubſtance, and the Church hath expreſsly commanded kneeling as the more reverend Poſture, therefore you ought to obey; I think ſo too: but this man conceives *Chriſt* command's both ſubſtance and ceremonies to be obſerved, and conſequently conceives the Churches command contrary to Chriſts, therefore he ought not to obey till you can rectifie his judgment; if you can, then he ought to obey alſo; if you cannot, have patience with your weak Brother, require no more of him in this matter then Chriſt required of his diſciples; ſure Chriſt would not have allowed any unfitting poſture; be not over-wiſe, nor over holy, condemn not that which Chriſt allowed. God is ſo infinitely gracious as to accept our poor devotions in any form, if but ſincere in ſubſtance, nay though weak and frail in the ſubſtantial part, *he will not break the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoaking flax*, his tender Fatherly bowels yern upon his dear Children coming to him afar off. Oh then let us learn to be like minded, tender and compaſſionate to our weak brethren, admit them into Cods worſhip in any poſture, if they come in ſincerity of heart, reject not thoſe whom God accepts.

I might go on thus to handle other Ceremonies, as, the Croſs in Baptiſme, the Ring in Marriage, &c. But I conceive it needleſs, the ſame reaſons being applicable to all, and he that is once brought to be indifferent and unconcerned in one, will ſoon be ſo diſpoſed to all. Wherefore I conclude this point of Ceremonies with St. *Paul*, *He that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it; he that eateth, eateth to the Lord for he giveth God thanks, and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth god thanks*: ſo he that kneeleth, kneeleth to the Lord, and he that kneeleth not to the Lord, he kneeleth not. And I deſire you farther to obſerve this circumſtance in St. *Paul*'s words, how he calls the zealous obſerver of Ceremonial matters, the weak Brother, and commands the ſtrong not to deſpiſe him, it being really a deſ-

picable weakneſs and a childiſh or effeminate kind of Devotion to be zealous in any ceremonial obſervance, which maſculine ſpirits are apt to deſpiſe, but in Chriſtian charity ought rather to pity and bear the infirmities of others. Wherefore let us be men of underſtanding, men in devotion, be zealous, and hold faſt the ſubſtantial parts of Religion, Piety, Juſtice, Temperance, Chaſtity, Truth, Sincerity, ſtand faſt for theſe, not recede one hairs breadth from theſe, keep but our ground and fight it out like men to death againſt all Powers and Principalities on earth, or under the earth, and let us leave it to women and Children to contend about Ceremonies, let it be indifferent to us whether this or that, or no Ceremony, whether kneel, or not kneel, bow or not bow, Surplice, or not Surplice, Croſs or no Croſs, Ring or not Ring, let us give glory to God in all, and no offence to our Brethren in any thing.

Now if any man would be ſo curious as to ask why St. *Paul* did not determine this point, whether they ſhould eat herbs only; or other meats alſo, whether regard a day or not, and ſo eſtabliſh Uniformity among them; I cannot imagine any other reaſon, but meerly to teach us this charitable complyance with one another, as neceſſary a practice as any other. Man is a very tickliſh Animal to Govern, he will not alwayes be guided by reaſon and authority, man hath a will as well as reaſon, and will have his own will in many things, even the godly: very few are found ſo entirely pious as wholly to deny themſelves, 'tis ſo high and ſharp a point of Religion, as you may break the heart ſtrings of many in winding them up ſo high, and thus crack all their Religion; perchance you would find it ſo your ſelves, had the Nonconformiſts the ſcrewing you up, as you them. Wherefore conſider your ſelves, leaſt ye alſo be tempted, be charitable to the weak, proceed not ſo ſeverely againſt them in your Courts of Judicature; but remember what St. *Paul* ſaith, *Coloſ.* 2. *Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy day, or of the new Moon, or of the Sabbath dayes, which are a ſhadow of things to come, but the body is of Chriſt*; will you then in reſpect of an Holy-day, Croſs in Baptiſme, ſtanding at the Creed, kneeling at the Sacrament, and the like, will you in reſpect of ſuch ſhadows, judge, excommunicate, ſentence to everlaſting flames, a Soul that holds of the body of Chriſt, believes all his holy Ghoſpel, accords with you in one Faith, one Baptiſme, who acknowledges the only true God Creator of Heaven and Earth, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent to be the Redeemer of Mankind, which our Saviour affirms, *To be Eternal Life*; will you condemn ſuch an one to Eternal Death? God forbid. My Reverend Fathers and Judges of the Church, I with St. *Paul*, *Col.* 3. beſeech you, *Put on fatherly bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long ſuffering* towards your poor weak Children, and ſo long as they hold faſt the body Chriſt, be not ſo rigorous with them for ſhadows; if they ſubmit to you in ſubſtance, have patience

ence, though they do not submit in Ceremonies; and give me leave to tell you my poor Opinion; This violent pressing of Ceremonies hath, (I humbly conceive) been a great hindrance from embracing them, men fearing your intentions therein to be far worse then really they are, and therefore abhor them. Have you never observed a flock of Sheep forcibly driven over a narrow Bridge, the poor Sheep fearing they are going into some Pen for Slaughter, choose rather to leap into the River then go forwards, but drive them on gently and patiently, they will of themselves take the way you desire. Uniformity in Ceremony is a good and desirable thing, therefore endeavour it; but unity in Faith and Charity is better, and therefore if you cannot obtain that, be sure to preserve this; this is the one thing necessary, choose this better part if you cannot have both; for this fierce urging Uniformity in worship hath caused great division in Faith as well as Charity; for had you by abolishing some Ceremonies taken the weak brethren into your Church, they had not wandred about after seducing Teachers, nor fallen into so many gross Opinions of their own, but being dayly catechised and instructed by your Orthodox and sound Preaching, they would have followed you like good Sheep; whereas now they wander about into a hundred by-paths of error, many whereof lead headlong to Hell. Now I beseech you in the fear of God set before your eyes the dreadful day of Judgment, when Christ on his Tribunal of Justice shall require an account of every word and deed, and shall thus question you; Here are several Souls who taking offence at your Ceremonies have forsaken my Church, have forsaken the Faith, have run into Hell, the Souls for which I shed my precious Blood; Why have you suffered this? nay, why have you occationed this? will you answer, it was to preserve your Ceremonies? will not Christ return unto you, Are your Ceremonies more dear unto you then the Souls for which I dyed? who hath required these things at your hands? will you for Ceremonies, which you your selves confess to be indifferent, no way necessary unto Salvation, suffer your weak Brethren to perish, for whom I dyed? Have not I shewed you how *David and his Souldiers were guiltless in eating the Shew-bread, which was not lawful but only for the Priests to eat*? If *David* dispenced with a Ceremony commanded by God to satisfie the hunger of his People, will not you dispense with your own Ceremonies to satisfie the Souls of my people, who are called by my Name, and profess my Name, though in weakness? Or will you tell Christ, they ought to suffer for their own wilfulness and perverseness, who will not submit to the Laws of the Church as they ought; will not Christ return? Shall they perish for transgressing your humane Laws, which they ignorantly conclude erroneous, and shall not you perish for transgressing my Divine Laws, which you know to be good and holy? had I mercy on you, and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servants? with the same measure you meeted it shall

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be measured to you again: I tremble to go farther, but most humbly beseech you for Christs sake, endeavour to regain these stray sheep, for whom he shed his precious blood, and think it as great an advantage, as great an honour to you, as it was to St. *Paul*, to become all things to all men, that you may gain some, as doubtless you will many, though not all; and the few standers off will become the more convinced, and at long running wearied out and gained also. Thus having reduced all into one fold in true faith and Christian charity, the present generation will much forget, the succeeding generation will be wholly ignorant of these erronious fancies, and all animosities being quite exinguished, wholsome edifying Ceremonies may be easily introduc't again with comfort to all, which are now irksome and grievous to many. And so I pass on to the second matter; The Church Service contained in the Book of Common Prayer, whereof briefly, because what I said before may be applyed to this also.

Concerning Church Service.

I will not here enter into the dispute, whether it be lawful for a Church to have a set form of Prayer, supposing that there are none but either highly fanatick, or higly factious, that affirm it unlawful; and with such I have no reason to expect, that reasonable Arguments should prevail; for enough hath beeen already printed to this purpose. I may also suppose, that there is nothing contained in our Book of Common Prayer, that is directly contrary to the Word of God; for had there been any such thing, we should have heard of it long since, which I never yet did from any sober man. And truly I might in the third place suppose that (a Book of Common Prayer being no way contrary to the Word of God) the use of it is far more conducing to Piety, then to suffer extemporary prayer to be used generally in Churches; experience hath fully declared it in our late confused times, when a man should have heard in many Churches such extravagant, such wild, such rash, such blasphemous expressions, as would drive any sober conscientious person out of their Churches. Can you with reason expect it otherwise? when half the Churches in this Nation have not a tolerable maintenance to support men of parts and discretion fit to perform so solemn and holy an Office. Had we the holiness, the zeal, the charity, the humility of the Primitive times, when men forsook all the World & daily sacrificed their lives for the Service of God, we might hope that God would graciously pour down upon us, as he did on them, the special gifts of praying and prophecying, but now when most serve God for gain, and would neither open *nor shut the Church doors*

doors for nought, as Malachi saith, we must not expect those gifts and graces. And therefore I conceive it absolutely necessary to have some form prescribed to be used by all; for were there liberty left to the more able and discreet, most would suppose themselves to be such (few discovering their own weakness;) and were it left to the Bishop to licence as he saw fit, it would prove a very great cause of our heart-burning among his Clergie, and hatred towards himself, yea and rebellion against him and the laws. But now in Christ I humbly beseech the Governours of the Church calmly to consider, Were it not better to have such a form of Service as would satisfie most. The Fathers of our Church (as I said before) when they reformed this Nation from Popery, were desirous to fetch off as many as they could, retaining for this cause all the Ceremonies and Forms of prayer they could with a good rectified conscience, and therefore they prescribed that form of second service to be said at the Altar, as carrying some resemblance to the Mass, then the peoples delight, which being now become the peoples hate, should for the same resemblance, according to the same rule of reason, be now taken away. We commend our Forefathers for doing piously and wisely, and yet we will not imitate them; they endeavoured to please and gain the people, we will needs displease and lose them: Certainly we cannot do our Forefathers a greater honour then to observe their rule of reason, to confirm to the Times; and therefore they are grosly mistaken who think it a dishonour to them for us to take away what they have established, when we keep close to the reason wherefore they did establish it: Wise Physitians by the same rule of reason prescribe things clean contrary according to the temper of their Patients, hot or cold, Some other things I could mention in the Book of Common Prayer (though no way ill in themselves) yet fit to be altered, and would obviously appear so to every wise man once resolved to compose such a form, as would take in most of this Nation, which I humbly conceive Governors should in conscience endeavour becoming all things to all men to gain some, though not all; yet happily gain all in process of time, for the reason before specified.

But though I desire such a form of Service, such Ceremonies also to be established, as may give most general satisfaction, yet I desire what is established may be generally observed, and not a liberty left (as some do propose) to add or detract Ceremonies or Prayers according to the various opinions and humours of men: for certainly this would cause great faction and division; those that are for Ceremonies would run from their own Church to others where they were used; others to some fine fancied Prayers of such as they approve of; and thus some Churches would be thronged, others deserted, and no account could be taken by the Pastor of this Congregation: Atheists also and Papists under pretence of frequenting other Churches would abandon all. This course (say you) would bring but few into the Church, and perchance drive some out, who having been long bred up to

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such and such Ceremonies, would have small devotion to frequent the Church, if all or many were abolished. To this I answer, That certainly his Religion is vain, that would abandon the Substance for want of the Ceremonies, which he acknowledgeth to be no way necessary, but only more satisfaction to his mind: Surely a very ignorant mind, who hath not learnt, *That obedience is better then sacrifice and whole burnt offerings*: And surely a very uncharitable mind, who would not leave ninety and nine unnecessary Ceremonies, to bring one sinful strayed Sheep into the Congregation, and convert him from the error of his non-conforming way. I profess I am amazed to see how many men of a very good sence in most things, so zealously erroneous in this business of Religion, seeing the scripture so plainly declares, that nothing so covers the multitude of our sins as an act of charity; nothing so acceptable unto God, so joyful to his holy Angels, as conversion of a sinner. Yet these men will most passionately (and pardon me if I say most uncharitably and irreligiously) cry, Away with these Idiot Sectaries and mad *Phanaticks*, let them wander and perish in their own wild imaginations, we will not leave one Ceremony, nor any one line of our Common Prayer Book to gain thousands of them. No, if you alter that, wee will rather leave the Church and go to the *Papists* Mass. If these be not as simple Sectaries and mad *Phanaticks* as any whatsoever, let God and his holy Angels judge. But as for you my Reverend Fathers of the Church, I hope you will consult with Scripture in this weighty Affair, and model all according to the rules of meekness, charity, and compassionate tenderness to weak ones, there set down: and endeavour with prudent admonitions to rectifie the errors of these too zealous Ceremonists, & with fatherly bowels of condescention to win the hearts of blind and wilful Separatists. Certainly the more understanding and powerful Leaders of them will not, cannot have the face to stand off after your charitable condescention, their populous pretences will be so confuted, their mouths so stopped, their faces so confounded, as for meer shame, if not for reason and religion, they must come into our Church: and their Pastors coming in, the Sheep will follow, though some stand a while and gaze: but at length having no men of ability to lead them on in their perverse wayes, the Shop-prating Weavers and Coblers will soon be deserted, and made heartless, seeing their own naked folly. And then shall we all joyn and joyfully sing *Te Deum* in our Churches, and the holy Angels in the Heavens. And then I shall most gladly sing with good old *Simeon*, *Lord now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

Concerning Preaching.

IT remains that I now handle this great buſineſs of Preaching, wherein I fear I ſhall diſpleaſe many, there being but few who uſe it according to the original Inſtitution; and yet I had rather they ſhould Preach as they do, then quite omit it; for certainly 'tis a neceſſary work for a Miniſter of the Goſpel to Preach the Goſpel. St. *Paul* tells us, *That ſome Preach the Goſpel out of envy*; yet he was pleaſed that Chriſt ſhould be ſo preached rather then not preached; and ſo I ſay of Preaching Chriſt out of vanity; as 'tis evident many do, preaching themſelves and their own abilities, at leaſt as they think abilities, though often great weakneſſes and conceited impertinences. I beſeech you tell me, did not Chriſt and the Apoſtles Preach the beſt way? and are not we to follow their example? Who dare ſay otherwiſe? yet many do otherwiſe; they take here or there a ſentence of Scripture, the ſhorter and more abſtruſe the better, to ſhew their skill and invention, this they divided and ſubdivided into generals and particulars, the *quid*, the *quale*, the *quantum*, and ſuch like quackſalving forms; then they ſtudy how to hook in this or that quaint ſentence of Philoſopher or Father, this or that nice ſpeculation, endeavouring to couch all this in moſt elegant language; in ſhort, their main end is to ſhew their Wit, their Reading, and whatever they think is excellent in them: No doubt rarely agreeing with that of St. *Paul*, *I determined not to know any thing among you ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified*; *And my ſpeech and my preaching was not with inticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power*: 1 *Cor.* 2. And I verily believe this is the reaſon why Preaching hath ſo little effect in theſe days, becauſe they labour to ſpeak the wiſdom of this world, which is fooliſhneſs with God, nor do they Preach in demonſtration of the Spirit, but in demonſtration of their Learning. I know full well this unapoſtolick way of Preaching was uſed by ſome of the Antient Fathers, eſpecially the *Greeks*, always fond of nicities and curioſities, and being now become Chriſtians (as I ſaid before) tranſplanted their beloved Rhetorical flowers of humane learning into Chriſtian Gardens, which proved rather Weeds to over-run the ſeed of ſound and plain Apoſtolick Doctrine, humane nature being a ſoyl apter to give nouriſhment and vigor to humane principles then divine. But when did ever any Learned, Witty Rhetorical harang, or cunning Syllogiſtical diſcourſe convert the tythe of St. *Peter*'s or St. *Paul*'s *fooliſh Preaching*, as he tearms it, *but the wiſdom of God to thoſe that are perfect* and ſound in the faith. Who is ignorant of that famous paſſage at the Council of *Nice*? whither reſorted with divers others, one Eminent Heathen Philoſopher, offering

himself (as the manner of those vain-glorious Sophisters was) to dispute with the Christian Doctors; some Bishops of greater Repute for Learning undertook him, and as they thought, clearly Confuted; but no way Converted him; at last rises up a grave antient Bishop of small Learning, but of great Faith and Piety, and (with great dissatisfaction of his Brethren fearing some gross baffle should befal this good man) comes up to the Philosopher, and with great Magisterial Authority recites unto him the Apostolick Creed, *I believe in God the Father Almighty*--------and in the close calls to him, *O Philosopher believest thou all this?* The Philosopher answered, *I believe*; not being able to resist the demonstration of spirit and power wherewith he uttered those Divine Mysteries, as he confess't before them all. You will say this was a Miracle of great rarity; I grant it, but many such Miracles should we see, had we the Faith and powerful Spirit of this Holy Bishop, and would indeavour to imitate Apostolical Preaching, not Philosophical Arguing, nor Rhetorical declaiming.

We see plainly the Apostolical Preaching was either Catechistical Instructions, or Pious Admonitions; not tying themselves to any form, but past from one matter to another as the Auditors condition required, not as the Preachers fancy and reading prompt; just as the *Roman* Emperour *Caligula*, who when Delinquents came before him to be judged, condemned or acquitted them as agreed best with the current of his Oration: So these men shape their discourse more to the applause then edification of the hearers. And so much time is spent in compoling these Oratory Sermons, as the Minister hath not leisure to perform a quarter of his Parochial Duty, of visiting the Sick, of admonishing the scandalous, of reconciling the janglers, of private examining and instructing the poor ignorant souls, thousands in every Country as ignorant as Heathens, who understand no more of most Sermons then if in Greek; so that the Sermon is rather a Banquet for the Wantons that are full, then instruction to those who are even starved for want of spiritual food, the plain and saving Word of Christ, not the nice conceited word of Man, which may nourish Camelions, never make solid sound Christians. There are others of a different strain, who wanting both Wit and Learning also, think to supply all by strength of Lungs, by loud and long babling, riding hackney from one good Town to another, and with fervency of spirit like a boyling pot running over where ever they come. Were it a laughing matter, who could contain to hear some seeming Zealot Pastors talk so much of their obligation to Preach the Gospel, and must (forsooth) do it in the Pulpit twice a Sunday, counting those almost accursed that do not so, and yet have many poor Sheep in their flock as ignorant as any Sheep, whom they never regard, never instruct in the first Principles of the Gospel; as if Preaching were tyed to the Pulpit and the Sabboth day. Pardon me

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if I tell you a Story which now comes in my head. I chanced to be in a Lords House on a *Saturday*, when a zealous Minister came in; after some complements and ceremonious discourse he told the Lord, That where ever he was he never failed to Preach the Gospel on the Lords day as his duty, and therefore entreated that the Pastor of the Parish might be desired to give place to him next morning. I suspecting both his zeal and design (which afterwards appeared) asked him if he had received any particular command from Christ to Preach at this place and that hour? The Minister, startling at my Question, answered, No. *I* replyed, Sure then other Ministers had the same obligation to Preach the Gospel as he had, and moreover it was the Pastors particular duty to Preach to his own Congregation on the Lord's day, how then could he in conscience desire the Pastor to omit his duty, and give place to a stranger who had there no duty incumbent upon him? But the Lord pulled me by the elbow and took me off from farther pressing him, and told him, he would send to the Pastor to give him place. But to return to our business. Very few are to be found, here and there one of Piety and Discretion, that demeans himself prudently in his Office; and the reason is this. *It* is grown up into a general opinion, That none are fit to be admitted into Holy Orders but such as have studied in the University; and if he hath learnt a little to chop Logick, he is presently deemed fit to divide the Word of Truth, and is easily instituted into a Living, and if he can bring some nice Metaphysical speculations from *Aristotle*; or some Theological distinctions from *Aquinas*, then he is worthy of two or three Livings or Prebends: and thus University Youths, and even Boyes of no experience or discretion, are made Spiritual Pastors, the gravest and most weighty Office in the World. *I* beseech you, what have these Sciences (falsly so called) to do with the Gospel, where we find not one tittle of them; but rather decryed as enemies to the Gospel, as tending to vain jangling, strife and contention, nothing of Edification. We had lately a brave story of the Jesuites in *China*, who finding the King and his Courtiers much delighted with the Mathematicks, but not very knowing in them, wrote to the General of their Order at *Rome* to send them some Priests, very skilful in that Science, to Preach the Gospel there. Why did they not send for some also well skilled in Puppit Plays? ridiculous creatures shall *I* say, or rather impious, who think to support the dignity, the majesty, the divinity of the Gospel with such humane toyes? Just as if a King, having some potent Enemy invading his Countrey, should instead of leading on a stout and gallant Army against him, lead on a Morice-dance capering and frisking most featly, thinking thereby to appease and gain the heart of his Adversary. *Yea fools and blind; we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*, Ephes. 6. 12. *And therefore the weapons of our warfare must not*

be carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, 2. Cor. 10. 4. *We must then take the whole armor of God, the helmet of Salvation, the brest-plate of Righteousness, the sheild of faith, the sword of the Spirit.* Read also St. *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, setting down the required qualifications of Bishops and Deacons, see if you can find any such Mathematick, Logick, Physick? no, but Gravity, Sobriety, Meekness, Diligence, and the like. Were such men taken into holy Orders and constituted Pastors, the Church of Christ had been far better edified, and the Pastors far more reverenced then now they are: though *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Euclid*, *Scotus*, *Aquinas*, were never known to them, so much as by name, yet they would want no pastoral knowledge which is compleatly contained in Scripture; as St. *Paul* told *Timothy*, *That it was sufficient to make him wise unto Salvation, profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction that the man of God might be throughly furnished*; mark, throughly furnished without Logick, Physick, Mathematick, Metaphysick, or School Divinity. Scripture Divinity throughly furnishes the man of God for all. I speak not this in disparagement of Vniversity Learning, which I highly value, if rightly made use of, 'tis as useful as honourable to a Nation, but much of Vniversity Learning as useless to a Spiritual Pastor, as the Art of Navigation to a Physitian; the Pastors only requisite and compleatly qualifying Science; being according to St. *Paul to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, and to Preach Christ, not with enticing words of mans wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*; to Preach Christ as well out of Pulpit as in the Pulpit; in season and out of season; to the poor and to the rich; to the simple and ignorant far rather than to the knowing; to Rebuke, to Correct, to edifie both by word and deed.

Wherefore I most humbly beseech the Church Governours to remember the Original Institution of the Ministry, what kind of men the Apostles chose into it, grave Elderly men, therefore styled Elders, and known as well by that name as Bishops, who having by long conversation gotten experience and knowledge to govern themselves, were made governors of others. I grant we have *Timothy* for an example of younger years, that is, young by way of comparison to the other Seniors; as a man of forty may be called young, compared to those of sixty; yet no youth simply, nor simple youth: and 'tis plain he was a person no way short of the Elders in gravity, though somewhat in years: St. *Paul's* general Rule was, not to admit of *Novices*; but all general Rules have some exceptions. *Timothy* was one and a rare one, we find not another. Next I pray consider what kind of Preaching they used, you may easily guess at their Sermons by their Epistles, full of short Catechistical Instructions, grave Exhortations, sober Reproofs, discreet Corrections, and then tell me whether a raw *Novice* from the Vniversity with all his Sciences and Languages be fit for this, or rather a grave sober person of age and experience, having a

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a good natural capacity, illuminated by Scripture Instruction and Prayer, using also the help of grave and sound Interpreters. Really 'tis most evident that the Church is run into great contempt by the slightness and giddiness of many Ministers, who intend nothing but to make a handsom School-Boyes Exercises in the Pulpit on *Sunday*, but never attend the other Parochial duties, no nor their own advance in Spiritual knowledge, but give themselves wholly either to idle Studies, or idler Recreations, and are very children in Divine knowledg and behaviour. I do affirm this in the presence of God as a truth, and I have known some pass for very good Preachers, that could not give a good account of the *Athanasian* Creed, nor scarce of the Childrens Catechisme; Masters of Art, but School-Boys in true Divinity, and so their Parishoners continue very Babes all their life long.

It would make any true Christian's heart bleed to think, how many thousand poor souls there are in this Land, that have no more knowledg of God then Heathens; thousands of the mendicant condition never come to Church, and are never lookt after by any; likewise thousands of mean husbandry Men that do come to Church, understand no more of the Sermon then Bruites: perchance in their infancy some of them learnt a little of their Catechisme, that is; they could, like Parrots, say some broken pieces, but never understand the meaning of one line (this is the common way of Chatechising) but afterwards as they grow up to be Men, grow more babes in Religion, so ignorant as scarce to know their Heavenly Father, and are admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper before they are able to give account of the Sacrament of Baptisme. This it is generally in the Country, and in the City as bad, partly for the reason before specified, and partly by reason the number in many Parishes is far greater then any one Pastor can have a due care of; he cannot know half the Names or Faces of them, much less their Faith and Behaviour, which is requisite that he may both instruct and reprove where there is need. Wherefore I humbly conceive 'tis necessary to divide these numerous Parishes into several parts; but withal to provide means out of them for several Ministers, for there is no hope to gain it from their Charity or Piety, which is plain Hypocrisy, seeming so zealous to hear the Word, but to contribute nothing towards it; the Minister may Preach his heart out, and yet not get out of their purses any tolerable Maintenance; a poor Husbandman in the Country of twenty pound a year, that gets his bread by the swear of his brows, pays more to his Minister than a Citizen that gets hundreds a year, sitting at great ease in his Shop, and spends more in Ribbonds, Laces and Perriwigs in one year, then he pays to his Minister in ten or twenty: I beseech them to consider what account they will give to their Lord and Master at that day.

But I return to the requisite qualities of a Minister, who according to

St. *Paul* is to be a Governor as well as a Preacher; to admoniſh and rebuke as well as inſtruct, and therefore of two evils chooſe the leſſer, rather Men defective in parts to preach, which may be ſupplied by Homilies, then defective in Wiſdom and Diſcretion to govern, which can't be ſupplied by other means. But would Men be content with the true Goſpel and Apoſtolick preaching, doubtleſs there might perſons be found out fit for both, to Govern and to Preach; to preach one God the Creator of all, one Chriſt the Redeemer of all, one Holy Ghoſt the Sanctifier of all, to preach the Baptiſme of Repentance, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to preach Godlineſs, Juſtice, Mercy, Charity, Sobriety, Chaſtity &c. All which will be far better performed by a grave and godly conſcientious Man, well Catechized, though he never ſaw Univerſity, though he knew no other Language but his Mother Tongue, then by any *Ariſtotelift*, *Scotiſt*, *Aquinatiſt*, with all their knacks of quiddities and qualities, Syllogiſmes and Enthymems, diſtinctions and ſubſumptions &c. Not one *Greek*, or *Italian*, or *French* of a thouſand knew any Language but his Mother Tongue when the Goſpel firſt flouriſhed there; not one *Indian* of hundred thouſand, where St. *Thomas* planted the Goſpel, ever heard of *Plato* or *Ariſtotle*; and ſo I may ſay of many other Nations where the Goſpel was planted and Prieſts ordained. When God inſtituted *Aaron* and that Prieſthood, when Chriſt inſtituted the Apoſtles and this Prieſthood, not a tittle mentioned of School Sciences or Forreign Languages. 'Tis true, the Apoſtles by the Holy Ghoſt received the gift of Tongues, becauſe they were to preach to all Nations; but we find not any infuſion of School learning by the Holy Ghoſt, nor any more gift of Tongues after the Goſpel once ſpread over the world; God thought it then needleſs, I pray let's be no wiſer then God and his Chriſt, who converted the world by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching, but I never yet heard of any one Nation converted by the wiſdom of Philoſophical Rhetorical Preaching. Miſtake me not, I ſay that Sciences and Languages are no way neceſſary for common Parochical Preachers, yet I grant that Sciences, eſpecially Hiſtorical, and Languages eſpecially the Oriental, are very uſeful to the perfect underſtanding of Scripture, and very fit for ſome Miniſters to ſtudy, to whom God hath given parts and means to acquire them, who may be helpful to others; and the Univerſities are very good places to train up youths to this purpoſe; but ſtill theſe faculties are no way neceſſary to a parochial Cure, a ſmall proportion of Learning with a great deal of Piety and Diſcretion is much better. Beſides there is another thing much to be conſidered. Were there ſuch grave conſcientious perſons admitted into the Miniſtry as the *Apoſtles* ordained, ſuch Preaching ſet up as they practiſed, and all other decryed, ſuch double honor paid unto the Miniſtry as St. *Paul* commanded and primitively was rendred (ſuch grave perſons would ſcarce ever fail of it) then we might find thouſands in the Nation that having means of their own, would preach the Goſpel to the poor for conſcience

ſake.

ſake. The maintenance for Miniſters in moſt parts is ſo wretchedly ſmall (and ſo like to be, the Tythes being in the hands of Lay-men without hopes of recovery) that there is no convenient ſupport for men of Worth and Gravity, and therefore Youths and ſtriplings as wretched are put into them of meer neceſſity, that they lye not wholly void; whereas if men that had ſome Eſtate to help to maintain themſelves, being perſons of conſcience and convenient Knowledge, were put into the Miniſtry, and ſuch preaching the Goſpel accepted of, as the Apoſtles and Primitive Diſciples uſed, the Cures would be ſerved with far more edification of the people, and honour to the Church, then now they are.

I moſt humbly beſeech all in the ſpirit of meekneſs and humility to conſider theſe things, laying aſide the veil of pomp and vanity, which blinds their eyes, and hinders them from diſcovering the naked truth and ſimplicity of the Goſpel. I call the Searcher of all hearts to witneſs, I wiſh unto all Clergy-men both double honour and double maintenance alſo, I can't think any thing too much for thoſe who conſcienciouſly labour in the Miniſtry. But ſeeing (as I ſaid) there is no hopes of regaining the Church maintenance, we in prudence ſhould ſeek out ſuch helps as may be had. And truly I have great reaſon to hope, that were this rule obſerved of putting only grave diſcreet and conſciencious perſons into the Miniſtry (whether Univerſity men or not, it matters not, ſo as fully inſtructed in the Doctrine of the Goſpel by ſound Commentators) many perſons of good rank and Eſtate would think it no diſhonour but rather a high honour to enter into it, as they did in the Primitive time; *Julian* neerly related to the *Roman* Emperour, and afterwards Emperour himſelf, thought it an honour to be admitted a Reader, one of the loweſt Offices in the Church. And for the better advancing this buſineſs, and fitting all ſorts of men with convenient Knowledge for the Miniſtry, I humbly conceive it very fit there ſhould be one good and brief Engliſh Comment of Scripture ſelected and compiled out of thoſe many voluminous Authors, laying aſid all impertinent criticiſmes, abſtruſe queſtions, nice ſpeculations, and the like, ſetting down only the plain and moſt obvious ſence in matters of Faith and good life, neceſſary to ſalvation; ſuch a book to be ſet forth by Authority, with a command that no man in Sermons, Exhortations or Catechiſings teach any thing contrary to it, and whatever Learning beyond that is brought into the Pulpit, let it rather be exploded then applauded; for if any countenance be given to excurſions, there will be no end, the itch men have to ſhew their Learning will ſoon bring us again into the vain unedifying practice we now are in. I humbly conceive it fit alſo that the book of Homilies be reviewed, not to correct any thing in them, for they are moſt excellent ſound Exhortations, containing the true Primitive Spirit; but to add to them what ever is wanting to the neceſſary Doctrine of Faith and good manners, to teach every perſon how to behave himſelf in his ſeveral vocation, and theſe commanded to be read

once

once over every year; for I have observed several, even good and conscientious Preachers to take quite another method, and preach on this or that Chapter, and so in the whole year, yea perchance in two or three years, never preach on the duty between Man and Wife, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Magistrates and Subjects; or omit to treat of Pride, or Malice, or Cheating, or the like, by reason of which omissions, several in the Congregation are ignorant in necessary duties, though rightly instructed in many things unnecessary.

I expect that many will cry out of this as a means to introduce lazineſs into the Miniſtry, and a hindrance from exerciſing thoſe Talents God hath endowed them with. To this I anſwer, Firſt, That I had rather the Miniſters ſhould be lazie, then the People ignorant in their duty. But ſecondly I anſwer, That beſides Pulpit Preaching, the Miniſter may find enough to do to keep him from lazineſs, and exercise the beſt, that is, the moſt uſeful Talents of a Miniſter, to viſit and comfort the Sick and Afflicted, to compoſe Differences and reconcile Janglers, to examine and inſtruct the meaner and duller part of his Flock, who are not capable of Pulpit preaching, to whom they muſt inculcate both Doctrines and Admonitions ten times over, and ſcarcely ſo, make them apprehend any Spiritual matters. Experience only can raiſe a belief how extreamly dull the common people are in the myſteries of Faith, and but little quicker in the principles of a good life: Chriſt dyed to ſave theſe poor vulgar Souls as well as thoſe of the Gentry and more learn'd, yet the labour of moſt Miniſters is to entertain thoſe that know enough, and are very lazy in Catechiſing thoſe poor ſouls that know nothing; let theſe be fully inſtructed, and then for me, let them ſhew their Talents by preaching as often as they pleaſe to others: All that I labour for, is, that thoſe may have it who moſt want it, either by injoyning ſuch Homilies as I mentioned to be yearly read, or ſuch Sermons to be yearly preached: I am no enemy to true Apoſtolical preaching, God forbid I ſhould; but to vain Scholaſtical uſeleſs preaching, to have the Paſtor, who ſhould daily watch over his Flock, ſit in his Study all the Week long, picking from that or this Quaint Author a few beautiful Flowers, and then come on *Sunday* with his Noſegay in his hand to entertain Ladies and Courtiers; for my part I count this far more ſinful lazineſs, then to read a Pious Homily on *Sunday*, and all the Week after, go up and down from houſe to houſe taking pains to inſtruct and exhort ſuch as I mentioned: But theſe ſhall be called dumb Dogs, yet ſurely by none but barking Curs, who are wholly ignorant in true Apoſtolick Preaching; Pardon me if I return them their due, who ſpeak evil of that they underſtand not.

They will Object, The Apoſtles and Primitive Diſciples did not read Homilies, but Preach'd themſelves; Neither do I deſire that any one Homily ſhould ever be read, ſo as we had the true Apoſtolick preaching both on *Sundays* in publick, and Week-days alſo in private, where there is need:

But I am ſure ſuch pious Homilies as I mentioned are no ways contrary to the Apoſtolical and primitive practice, and are far more uſeful then ſuch preaching as we have now adays. And I am alſo ſure, that in the pureſt and moſt primitive time, Homilies under another name were read in the Churches, that is, the Epiſtles of Apoſtolick godly Biſhops written to other Churches, were read in the Congregation with great Veneration; Shall the name of *Epiſtle* make the one applauded, the name of *Homily* make the other reproached, the contents and the intent being the ſame, to ſtirr up the people to godlineſs? If this will ſatisfy, let the *Homilies* be ſtyled *Epiſtles* to ſuch or ſuch a Church, and then I hope they will paſs for current. But you will ſay, The Compilers of our Homilies are not of equal authority to thoſe primitive Epiſtlers; Let that paſs, but I am ſure they are of far more authority, then moſt of our Preachers. I pray conſider, how many giddy Youths are of our Miniſtry, how many of greater age but of as little gravity or diſcretion; how many that vainly preach themſelves and their own abilities, not Chriſt and his Goſpel; how many that preach piouſly and yet not uſefully, but, as I ſaid before, many things unneceſſary, omitting many neceſſary: Summ up all theſe particulars, and you will find a ſmall remainder that preach piouſly and edifying alſo, very few to equal the Compilers of our Homilies; and then calmly conſider the great uſe, yea the great neceſſity of ſuch Homilies. But if you can furniſh all our Churches with pious diſcreet edifying preaching Paſtors, I am abundantly ſatisfied, and do you ſeal up the Book of Homilies till a new dearth of ſpiritual food, which God in his great mercy prevent. *Amen.*

Concerning Biſhops and Prieſts.

WHoever unbiaſs'd reads the Scripture, thence proceeds to the firſt Chriſtian Writers, and ſo goes on from Age to Age, can't doubt but that the Church was always governed by *Biſhops*, that is, by one *Elder*, or *Preſbyter*, or *Preſident*, or what elſe you pleaſe to call him, ſet over the reſt of the Clergy with authority to Ordain, to Exhort, to Rebuke, to Judg and Cenſure as he found cauſe: no other form of Government is mentioned by any Authority for Fifteen hundred years from the Apoſtles downwards. Now who can in reaſon and modeſty ſuſpect thoſe Primitive Biſhops who lived in the days of the Apoſtles, choſen by them into the Church, ſucceeded them in Church Government, yea and in Martyrdom alſo for the Faith, as *Clemens*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarpus* and others, who, *I* ſay, can ſuſpect them to be prevaricators in Church Diſcipline, and take upon them another form of

Episcopal Government contrary to Apostolican Institution. These great Masters of Self-denyal who gave their Lives for the Truth, would they transmit unto Posterity a Church Government contrary to the Truth; let who will believe it, I can neither believe it, nor suspect it: And there is yet another thing very observable, that all the Orthodox Church dispersed all the world over, some parts having no correspondence at all with the other by reason of distance, some by Warrs divided and made cruel Enemies, yet all agreed in this form of Government; and not only the Orthodox, but also the Schismaticks and Hereticks, who separated from, hated and persecuted the Orthodox Church, they likewise retained still this form of Government, as if all were of necessity compelled to acknowledg this, having never known, heard nor dream'd of other. And therefore nothing but necessity, if that, can excuse those who first set up another form of Government to their own Maskers, let them stand or fall, I will not presume to censure them: I will only say, That from *the beginning it was not so*, and I thank God 'tis not so with us, but as it was in the beginning, so it is now with us, and ever shall be I trust in God. *Amen.*

But notwithstanding all this, yet 'tis very much to be doubted whether they were of any distinct superiour order from and above the Presbyters, or one of the same order set over the rest with power to ordain Elders, to exhort, rebuke, chastise, as *Timothy* and *Titus* were constituted by St. *Paul*. For though they were of the same order with the other Elders and Pastors, yet there was great reason for some to be placed with greater Authority to rule over the rest. The Scripture tells us, That even in the days of the Apostles there were several seducing teachers, leading the people into errors and heresies, and more were to follow after the Apostles times, grievous wolves in sheeps clothing; and therefore it was very necessary to pick out some of eminent soundness in faith and godliness of life, and set them up on high with great Authority, as fixed Stars in the Heavens (so styled *Revel.* 1.) to whom all might have regard in dangerous times, as Marriners observe in their Sea-faring journies. But the Scripture no where expresses any distinction of order among the Elders, we find there but two orders mentioned, Bishops and Deacons. Of Deacons we shall trea afterwards. Let us now proceed to the Order of Bishops and Priests, which the Scripture distinguishes not, for there we find but one kind of Ordination, then certainly but one Order, for two distinct Orders can't be conferred in the same instant, by the same words, by the same actions. They who think Deaconship and Priesthood distinct, the one subservient to the other, though they intend in the same hour to consecrate the same Man Deacon and Priest, do they not first compleat him Deacon, then Priest? I pray let any Man shew me from Scripture (as I said) *Timothy* or *Titus* or any one ordained twice, made first Priest then Bishop, which

which is absolutely necessary if they be distinct characters, and 'tis generally affirmed, though I humbly conceive they scarce understand what they affirm, I mean they understand not what these characters are, whether *Greek*, *Hebrew*, or *Arabick*, or what else. But let that pass, I desire them only to shew me how a Man can make two characters with one stroke or motion, A. and B. at the same instant. If then neither *Timothy* nor *Titus*, nor any other were but once ordained, whence can we gather these two distinct characters, these two distinct Orders? We find the Apostles themselves but once ordained, those by the Apostles but once ordained, and so on. When St. *Paul* left *Titus* in *Creete* to ordain, he mentions only one ordination, that of Presbyters, (so the word in *Greek*) no other; ther's no commission given him to ordain Bishops and Presbyters. Who then was to ordain Bishops there? not *Titus*, he had no such command, we do not find that St. *Paul* himself did; And sure you will not grant that the Presbyters which *Titus* ordained, that they could ordain Bishops there, for you will not allow them to ordain so much as Presbyters? Yet Bishops you will needs have in every City, and in *Creete* were very many, who ordained Bishops for them all? Truly I can't find, nor you neither I believe. But you will say, The superior order contains in it virtually the inferior order, (let this pass at present) doth Presbyter then virtually contain Bishop? If so; then all Presbyters are Bishops. No say you, Bishop is the superior order, and that contains in it Presbyter. You say so, but by your leave you are to prove so, or give me leave to say otherwise, especially seeing I have Scripture for my saying, and you have none for yours. But should I grant Bishop the superior, what then? we find *Titus* ordained not any but Presbyters, as he was commanded by St. *Paul*; so we are still at a loss for our Bishops, we find not their Ordination. Or did St. *Paul* mistake in his expression, and meaning *Bishops in every City*, said *Presbyters in every City*, let this pass also, and I pray let us see what you mean by this, The superior order virtually contains the inferior. Do not you say they are two distinct Orders, two real distinct indelible characters imprinted in the Soul, as the School-men affirm (give me leave to talk their Language though I understand it not) If I take a fair paper and make an A. upon it for the character of Presbyter, and then make a B. upon it for the Character of a Bishop, the same paper contains both Characters, but sure one Character doth not contain the other, A. doth not contain B. nor doth B. contain A. So the same Soul may receive two Characters, two Orders, but if the two Orders be distinct, how can they contain each other, I understand no more then I do these Holy Characters. If they can paint them out unto me in their proper figures, perchance I may understand them better, but as yet I ingeniously confess my ignorance. I grant in a Metaphysical way of Abstraction, the superiour species contains the inferiour genus. A Man, a rational creature, contains the animality of a Horse, the inferiour creature, but

doth not contain a real Horſe in his belly, nor can a man beget Horſes or men when he pleaſes. Nor can you truly ſay a man is a Horſe; I believe my Schoolmen would take it in ſnuff ſhould I affirm any of them to be Horſes, &c. But they affirm that a *Biſhop* doth not only virtually contain the Prieſthood, but is really a Prieſt, and can make Prieſts or Biſhops as he pleaſe, Whereby you may ſee this anſwer, That the Superiour Order virtually contains the inferiour, is a meer evaſion; it ſounds as if it were ſomething, but really is nothing to our purpoſe at all; for we are not now upon Metaphyſical abſtractions, but real individual ſubſiſtencies, two actual diſtinct Orders, as they would have it, two diſtinct indelible characters imprinted on mens ſouls by Ordination, as *A.* and B. which can never be truly affirmed one of the other. *A.* is not B. and B. is not *A.* a man is not a horſe, and a Horſe is not a man; ſo a Biſhop ordain'd only Biſhop, is not a Prieſt, nor a Prieſt a Biſhop, if they be diſtinct. Wherefore I muſt beleive them one and the ſame Order, eſpecially ſeeing the Scripture applies the ſame name promiſcuouſly to both; which is the ſecond argument of their identity, to be one and the ſame.

Acts. 20. St. *Paul* ſends to *Epheſus* to call the *Presbyters* of that Ghurch unhim at *Miletum*, and ſpeaking to them he calls them all Biſhops (in our Tranſlation 'tis *Overſeers*) Verſe 28. So in his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, he directs to *all the Saints with the Biſhops and Deacons*, both in the plural number ſo that by the word *Biſhops*, we muſt needs underſtand *Presbyters*; for Biſhops as we now take the word, were never many in one City. I pray obſerve alſo St. *Paul* Epiſ. to *Titus* 1. 5. *For this cauſe left I thee in Crete----- that thou ſhouldeſt ordain Elders in every City--- if any be blameleſs-- for a* Biſhop *muſt be blameleſs*, Is it not here evident, that an Elder and a Biſhop in St. *Paul's* Language is one and the ſame; otherwiſe there were no coherency at all in St. *Paul's* ſpeech. If this be not convincing, beyond all poſſible evaſion, I underſtand nothing of diſcourſe. Other ſuch places are obvious in Scripture to every one, I need mention no more; only I deſire to inform the Reader of a paſſage to this purpoſe, in an Epiſtle of *Clemens* to the *Corinthians*, This *Clemens* is mentioned in Scripture, and is he whom St. *Peter* appointed his ſucceſſor at *Rome*, and who was of ſo great Authority, that as St. *Hierome* tells us, this his Epiſtle was read in Churches: Now in this Epiſtle *Clemens* particularly ſets forth the conſtitution of the Church by the Apoſtles, and what Miniſters they ordained in the Church; to wit, *Biſhops* and *Deacons*, he names no other, which ſeems to me as full an evidence as can be, that there were no other Orders in the Church in thoſe daies but thoſe two; And yet we are ſure there was then *Presbiters* in the Church; for *Peter* and *John* call themſelves *Presbyters*, and St. *Peter* calls them *Presbiters* to whom he wrote his Epiſtle; ſo that if there were but two Orders, to wit, *Biſhops* and *Deacons*, *Presbyters* muſt be one and the ſame with *Biſhops* or with *Deacons*; not with *Deacons* therefore one and the ſame with *Biſhops*; One Order called

called by two names promiſcuouſly in Scripture, as hath been ſhewed before: And *I* deſire you to obſerve that of thoſe two names *Presbyter* and *Biſhop*, if there be any dignity and eminency expreſt in one more then the other, ſure it is in the name of *Presbiter*, not *Biſhop*, becauſe the Apoſtles themſelves, and the chief of the Apoſtles (as ſome would have it who ſtand higheſt on their Pantables) are in Scripture ſtyled *Presbyters* or *Elders*, as the word in our Engliſh Tranſlation, but never *Biſhops*, as *I* remember. And therefore *I* can't but wonder why that haughty head of the Papiſts ſhould not aſſume to himſelf the title of his pretended predeceſſor St. *Peter*, *Presbyter* rather then *Biſhop*, unleſs it be by God's providential diſpoſure to ſhew his blindneſs in this as well as in other things, and make him confute himſelf by this name of Biſhop, which was never given to St. *Peter*, no more then St. *Peter* gave unto him the Headſhip of the Church. As to the interpretations and anſwers given to theſe and ſuch like Scripture expreſſions, ſure *I* need not take any pains to confute them; for they are ſo weak as that *Petavius*, a late Writer, and great ſtickler for the ſuperiority of *Epiſcopacy*, durſt not truſt to them, nor would venture his credit to make uſe of them, but found out a new and rare conceit, as he conceives, That theſe *Presters* mentioned in Scripture and called by both names, were all really *Biſhops*, and that the Apoſtles Ordained them ſo, as moſt convenient for that time; for the Congregations of the Faithful being ſmall, there needed no Prieſts under the Biſhops to officiate, and yet there was need of a Biſhop in thoſe ſmall Congregations, becauſe there were ſeveral things to be done, which were not within the power and capacity of *Presbiters* to act, (as he ſuppoſes) *viz.* the laying on of hands, and confirming the Faithful after Baptiſme, the veiling of devoted Women, the reconciling of penitents, the ordaining *Deacons* where there was need; and adds moreover ſeveral impertinences, as the making of Chriſme, conſecrating Church-Veſſels, &c. And *Petavius* mightily applauds himſelf in this conceit, as the only means to clear all difficulties: Our Doctor *Hammond* alſo finding the uſual interpretations of thoſe places of Scripture above mentioned too weak to ſuſtain the arguments builded on them for the Unity of Order, goes along after *Petavius* a great way in the fore cited diſcourſe (though not in the later impertinances), and affirms that the *Presbyters* then were all *Biſhops*; And ſo far *I* go with them, that all were *Presbyters*, all *Biſhops*, becauſe all was one, and one was all, ſeveral names not ſeveral Orders, as they would have it, and this *I* humbly conceive firmly proved by my former Argument of one Ordination, wherein two diſtinct Orders could not be conferred, ſo that ſtill *I* require them to ſhew me from Scripture where theſe *Presbyter-Biſhops* were twice Ordained, elſe it cannot be truly affirmed they were really and actually Prieſts and Biſhops. As for that anſwer, That though but one Order was conferred, *viz.* Epiſcopal, yet that being ſuperior to the Prieſthood contains this virtually in it; firſt you are to prove *Biſhop* to be

ſuperiour

ſuperior to *Presbiter*, which I deny, the Apoſtles being peculiarly called *Presbyters*. Secondly, that one contains the other, I ſuppoſe is already confuted, and fully declar'd that it cannot be; And as I mentioned before, you do in effect confeſs it your ſelves by your practice; for if the Superiour Order ſo contains the inferiour as to enable a Man thereby to act all things belonging to the inferiour, it is a very impertinent thing to ordain a Man, as you do, firſt a *Deacon*, then a Prieſt, then a Biſhop, when you deſign to confer all upon him in the ſame day and hour.

And now I pray give me leave to examine a little *Petavius* his rare conceits, which he conceives will ſatisfy all former objections, and will meet with no news ones. He confeſſes the *Presbyters* of the Apoſtles times were all of one Order, *viz. Biſhops*, becauſe the Paſtors of each congregations might perform thoſe ſeveral acts he mentions, which a bare *Presbyter* is not capable of. And why not capable of them, how doth he prove this? he brings not one tittle of proof for this out of Scripture, where there are good proofs to the contrary. St. *Peter* and St. *John*, *Presbyters*, could do all theſe and more; *Ergo*, *Presbyters* are capable of all. But ſaith he, *The Apoſtles were Biſhops alſo*; *alſo* is impertinent, as ſignifying ſomewhat elſe; whereas I ſay and prove 'tis one and the ſame Order, only another name, it lyes upon him to prove this difference of Orders; and how doth he prove it, becauſe *Presbyters* can't do the acts of a *Biſhop*; why, this is the thing in queſtion; and thus he runs round to prove this by that, and that by this, and not one tittle out of Scripture for either. I know full well by ſeveral *Canons* of Councils made ſome at one time, ſome at another, the *Biſhops* reſerved many things to themſelves, whereof moſt of them had been practiſed formerly by *Presbyters*, and the Canons were made to prevent the like for the future; for had there not been ſuch a practice, there had been no need of ſuch Canons, whereby they reſerved theſe things unto themſelves, and for their own greatneſs would needs perſwade the World, that *Presbyters* were not capable of them. I grant, that for decency and order in that ſence, ſome things may be reſerved to ſome, other things to other to perform, but that the Order of *Prieſthood* was not capable, is even ridiculous that the *Prieſthood* being capable to do the greateſt things, ſhould not be capable to do the leaſt; he can conſecrate the Souls of Men by Baptiſm and the Lords Supper, yet (for ſooth) can't conſecrate their Oyl, and their Cups, and their Candleſtiks, which we never heard the Apoſtles did or dream'd of, but are the fond dreams of doting Men, juſt like the *Phariſees* waſhing cups and platters after the doctrines of Men. Really there needs no better confutation of their diſtinction and ſuperiority of Epiſcopal Order, then the mean ridiculous things which they aſcribe unto their Biſhops, and debar Presbyters of, which my thinks a Presbyter ſhould contemn were they offered him; and therefore ſuch Arguments as theſe are not worth the ſmall pains I have taken about them.

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I proceed to ſomewhat that ſeems a little better; *Petavius* tells us, That the number of Chriſtians encreaſing, and factions ariſing in the Church, the Apoſtles at length towards the end of their times, choſe out of theſe *Presbyter-Biſhops*, ſome chief Men and placed them as Governors over the reſt, and reſerved unto theſe principal Men the power of ordaining; thus far I freely conſent, the Scripture declares it, and it ſeems moſt Rational. And I humbly conceive theſe Governors, and Ordainers were Men of great prudence and moderation, and probably had alſo that gift of the Holy Ghoſt, *The diſcerning of ſpirits*, and judging of Men (a gift mentioned in Scripture among others) that none might be admitted into the Prieſthood but Men of meek and peaceable ſpirits. But now I would ask *Petavius* when theſe Governing Ordaining *Biſhops* were ſet over the reſt of the *Presbyter-Biſhops*, when *Titus* was firſt ſettled with this Authority in *Creete*, and when *Timothy* was thus placed at *Epheſus*, where we find before were ſeveral *Presbyter-Biſhops*, what became of them? were they un-Biſhop'd and made ſimple *Presbyters*? they muſt no more ordain nor govern, but be ſubject to *Timothy* and *Titus*. I am ſure it was thought no ſmall puniſhment in future Ages, when *Biſhops* were thus by decrees of Councel abaſed and caſt down unto the *Presbyter* form, and it was for ſome notorious crimes. I pray what crime were all theſe *Presbyter-Biſhops* guilty of, to be thus handled, and tumbled down into a lower form? Truly *Petavius* deals hardly with them, unleſs he can ſhew us their crime. Or will he inſtead of accuſing them excuſe himſelf, and ſay they were not un-Biſhopt nor abaſed, but only reſtrained from exerciſing that power their order was capable of, had they been commiſſioned thereto. Truly I muſt commend *Petavius* if he will thus ingeniouſly confeſs the truth, for I ſhall by and by fully declare that 'tis the diverſity of Commiſſion; and not of Order, that enables Men to act diverſly, and that a *Biſhop* without commiſſion can do no more than a *Presbyter* without commiſſion; and therefore I farther begg of *Petavius*, that, till he can prove the contrary, he would confeſs them alſo to be all of one ſingle Order, called only by divers names, *Prieſt*, or *Biſhop*, and one choſen out of the number, not the reſt abaſed, but he exalted with authority to Govern. This is the rational and common practice of all Societies, Corporations, Colledges, Monaſteries, Conclave of Cardinals, what not; There is no new Order ſuppoſed in any of theſe, but only a new Election, and a new Authority given, according to the fundamental conſtitution of each Society. The Pope himſelf with his triple crown and triple dominion over all Patriarchs, Arch-Biſhops, Biſhops, pretends to have no new order of Popeſhip, but only the new Authority conferred by his Election: why then may not *Presbyters* choſen to preſide over the reſt without any new Order, do the like. And for this very reaſon I conceive *Juſtin Martyr* uſes the name of *Preſident* always for *Biſhop*; and St. *Cyprian* alſo, a Biſhop himſelf, and moſt glorious Martyr, he calls himſelf

himself and other Bishops generally by the name of *Præpositus*, as if this were the main distinction betwixt himself and his Presbyters, that he was *Præpositus* only, one of them placed with authority over them: no more: Nor doth the name of Bishop in the original *Greek* signify any more then an Overseer of the rest. And as for the avoiding of Heresies and Factions, they thought it meet to settle some Bishop, of great soundness in faith, and godliness of life, with authority to restrain and chastise disorderly Pastors. Just so, when whole Nations were converted, and not only the Pastors but the Bishops also (who had oversight of the Pastors) encreased in number, then for the same reason it was thought fit there should be an Overseer of the Bishops, and be called an Arch-Bishop; when the Arch-Bishops were multiplied, then another set over them, and he called a Patriark; and at last one over the Patriarks, and he call'd *Papa* a Pope *Catexochen*, though *Papa* before was a name attrributed to other Bishops. Now as *Pope Patriarck*, *Arch-Bishop*, *Bishop*, are all one and the same Order (Papists themselves grant this) so *Bishop*, *Elder*, *Presbyter*, *Priest*, all one and the same, only one of these set over the rest, and he now particularly call'd *Episcopus*, that is, Bishop *Catexochen*, because he oversees the Overseers: but this last constitution only is Apostolical, the other of Arch-Bishop, Patriark, Pope, are meer humane, not at all mentioned in Scripture.

But now another Objection arises. *Petavius* grants that all the Elders which the Apostles Ordained were Bishops, and towards the end of the Apostles days they set some eminent amongst them over the rest to govern and ordain Elders in every City, as *Timothy* and *Titus*, and these Elders in every City were Bishops, and thus the Apostles left the Church with Bishops only and Deacons. And this is evident by what I brought before out of *Clemens*, who lived after the Apostles days, and mentions only Bishops and Deacons left by the Apostles. This being so, I desire to know who after the Apostles days began this new kind of Ordination of *Presbyters* or *Elders* not *Bishops*, the Apostles Ordained none such; who then? and by what authority was this new Order set up? the Scripture mentions it not; when and by whom came it in? A very bold undertaking without Scripture or Apostolical practice.

I will not boast my conceit as *Petavius* doth his; only *I* wish the Reader to consider which is most practical, most rational, or rather most scriptural, thereon *I* frame this wole Fabrick as the Rock and only sure Foundation; humane Brain is too weak to erect and to support the Fabrick of the Church of God, which the *Romanists* have made a very *Babel* with their humane inventions and multiplied Characters and Orders; some of them would have nine several holy Orders in God's Church militant here on Earth, because there are nine several Orders of Cœlestial Spirits in the Church Triumphant in Heaven. This is a castle of their own building in the Air, a rare foundation for God's Church. Others will have seven several

veral Orders and Characters as ſeven Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. Hath the Holy Ghoſt then but ſeven ſeveral Gifts to confer on Men? St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 12. counts unto us nine; not as if theſe were all, but only for example ſake, to ſhew us that many and divers Gifts are conferred on us by one and the ſame Spirit; and in the concluſion of the ſame Chapter he mentions eight. Theſe things were uttered accidentally according to the occaſion, not as limiting the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt to any ſet number. But if you will farther look into their application of theſe Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and ſee to what kind of ſeveral Orders they appropriate them, it would make a Man amazed to ſee ſober Learned Men, even that great Wit and Scholar *Aquinas*, diſcourſe in ſuch wild manner; as did you but ſtand behind a Curtain to hear and not ſee them, you doubtleſs would conclude you heard ſome old Woman in the Nurſery telling her Dreams to Children, rather than Divine Doctors in School. I'le name but one or two of their Orders. The Porter of the Church Door is one, and he (forſooth) hath a Sacred Character imprinted on his Soul, and his Gift is *the diſcerning of Spirits*, that he may judge who are fit to enter into God's Church, who to be ſhut out. Another of their Orders is that of *Acolouthi*, who are now (antiently they were quite another thing) certain Boys carrying Torches, and attending on the Biſhop ſaying Maſs; theſe have their Character alſo, and their Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, is the *interpretation of Tongues*, ſignified (no doubt on't) by the Light in their Hands, but underſtand no more of Tongues than the Stick of their Torch. I will not weary you with more of their Abſurdities.

Our Epiſcopal Divines rejecting theſe chymerical fancies of Orders and Characters, ſuppoſe it to be a certain Faculty and Power conferred by the laying on of hands for the exerciſe of Miniſterial Duties; and according to this purpoſe the Superior Order contains the Inferiour, as the greater Power contains in it the leſs: Thus *Epiſcopacy* being the ſuperior Order, contains in it Prieſthood and Deaconſhip, theſe three are their ſuppoſed diſtinct Orders. They may ſuppoſe this if they pleaſe, and I may ſuppoſe the contrary: But I would gladly know on what Scripture they ground this diſcourſe, that's the thing I ſtill require, and there we find no larger Faculty or Power given to *Biſhops*, but rather to *Presbyters*, as I have ſhewed, the Apoſtles who had the greateſt power being ſtiled *Presbyters*, not *Biſhops*. And when our *Biſhops* do Ordain *Presbyters*, do not they uſe the very ſame form of words which our Saviour uſed when he Ordained the Apoſtles? *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt: whoſe ſins ye forgive, they are forgiven*, &c. Do they not then by the ſame words confer the ſame power? (for I hope they uſe no Equivocation, nor mental Reſervation) if the Power be the ſame, the Order is the ſame by their own Rule. Again, let us examine their own Practice; Do they not require a Man ſhould be ordained firſt Deacon, before he be ordained Prieſt, and Prieſt before Biſhop; what needs this, if

the ſuperiour contains the inferiour. But in Scripture we find it otherwiſe, *Timothy* who long officiated under St. *Paul* as a *Presbyter*, when he was left at *Epheſus*, and ſo when *Titus* was left at *Creet*, both to be Biſhops, we find no new ordination; were this requiſite, ſure the Scripture would have given us at leaſt ſome hint of it, but not one tittle there. But if the Scripture be defective in expreſſions, you will ſupply it by the expreſſions and practice of the Church in firſt ſucceeding Ages.

Before you go on and take much pains to ſhew me this, give me leave to tell you, that I ſhall not eaſily recede from Scripture in fundamentals, either of Faith or Church-diſcipline, in things indifferent of themſelves, or in more weighty matters very doubtfully expreſs't in Scripture, I ſhall always moſt readily ſubmit to the interpretation of the Primitive and Univerſal Church, I require both Primitive and Univerſal; for I ſhewed before, that in matters of Faith there were ſome errors very Primitive, yet not continued by the Univerſal Church, but rejected in ſucceeding Ages. And at the time of the Evangelical Reformation by *Luther*, *Melanction*, *Calvin*, &c. I can ſhew ſome errors generally received in moſt, if not in all the Churches of Chriſtendom, but neither approved nor known by the Primitive Church; wherefore I require what you produce, ſhould be both Primitive and Univerſal, and this to interpret ſome place of Scripture doubtful in it ſelf, not plain: Now as to the buſineſs in hand, I can't yield that the Scripture is very doubtful in it, or ſcarce doubtful at all; for though in Scripture 'tis not *in terminis* ſaid *Presbytery* and *Epiſcopacy* are both one and the ſame Order, yet the circumſtantial expreſſions are (as I have ſhewed) ſo ſtrong and many, that they are equivalent to a cleer expreſſion *in terminis*. Secondly, this is not a matter of any indifferency, but of vaſt and dangerous conſequence, if miſtaken, That a Church without ſuch Biſhops as you require can't be truly call'd a Church, and ſo we ſhall exclude many Godly Reformed Churches: For if Biſhops be of ſuch a ſuperiour and diſtinct order as you pretend, if the power of Ordination be inherent in them only, Then where no Biſhop, no true Prieſts ordained, where no Prieſts no Sacraments, where no Sacraments no Church. Wherefore I humbly beſeech you be not too poſitive in this point, leſt thereby you do not only condemn all the Reformed Churches, but the Scripture and St. *Paul* alſo, who tells us, That the Scripture is ſufficient to make us wiſe unto Salvation, both in matters of faith and works alſo, to inſtruct and throughly furniſh us to every good work: and will any deny this of Ordination to be both a good and neceſſary work, ſeeing that the powerful preaching the Word and adminiſtration of the Sacraments depend upon it. Wherefore I dare not by any means ſuſpect the Scripture defective in this weighty affair. Yet to ſhew you our willingneſs to hear all things, let us hear what you can tell us from Antiquity.

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The first you bring is *Epiphanius*, three hundred years after the Apostles, from whom the main Objection is drawn against the Indentity of Order, and shot as a Cannon Ball against us beyond all possible resistance, but you will find it to be a meer Tennis Ball. *Epiphanius* making a Catalogue of Hereticks, puts in *Ærius* for one, who was an *Arian*, and moreover held that *Bishops* and *Priests* were all of one Order, and of equal Dignity and Authority, and that a *Presbyter* had power to Ordain, Confirm, and in short, to act any thing equal with a Bishop. That he was an Heretick is apparent, being an *Arrian*; nay I shall not scruple to yeeld unto you that he was an Heretick in this his assertion concerning *Episcopacy* and *Presbytery*, (as we now understand them); I say, the Assertion contains Heresie in one part but not in every part, *viz.* That the Bishop and other Presbyters are of equal authority and power to act, this may, in some sense, be called Heresie, for it is against Apostolical Constitution declared in Scripture, therefore an Heresie; and if you can shew me from Scripture as much against Identity of Order, I shall brand him for an Heretick in that also; but being sure there is no such thing in Scripture, there can be no Heresie in affirming the Identity. I fully agree with *Tertullian*, we can make no judgment, *de rebus fidei, nisi ex literis fidei*, of matters of Faith but from the writings of Faith, that is, the Scripture, and therefore I shall never be pulled from this Pillar of Truth. The Scripture is our compleat Rule of Faith, no Opinion is heretical and damnable which is not against that. Now, *Good Reader*, I pray take notice that *Epiphanius* was a very godly Bishop in the main, but yet a very cholerick Man, as appears in that his fierce contest with *John* Bishop of *Constantinople*, and his bitter expressions therein, which I do not mention in disparagement of this holy Man, but only to give the *Reader* a caution to remember, that passionate Men do sometimes censure more severely than there is cause: *Epiphanius* being a Bishop, and finding the authority and dignity of *Episcopacy* much disparaged by *Ærius* being an *Arrian* Heretick, falls upon him sharply for this his Opinion also, wherein he was in part much to be condemned, as I freely confest before, but not in the very Point now in question; nor doth *Epiphanius* himself condemn him in this particular as an Heretick, but only in the gross, to which I freely give my vote. But you will tell me, that a Man of a far milder temper, St. *Austin*, doth also enrol *Ærius* among Hereticks. I know it well, but I desire you to know that St. *Austin* doth not lay this to his charge as an Heresie, for he saith only thus; *Ærius also was an Heretick, for he fell into Arrian Heresie, and he added some Opinions of his own*; then St. *Austin* recounts several of his Opinions, whereof this was one, That he affirmed there was no difference between a *Bishop* and a *Presbyter*; where I pray you observe, St. *Austin* gives us the reason why he ranks him with Hereticks, *(viz.)* because he fell into the *Arrian* Heresie; then follows, And he added some Opinions of his own: St. *Austin* calls these Opinions not Heresies, for he doth not say he added

more Hereſies of his own. Secondly, I pray you obſerve St. *Auſtin* makes no mention of his affirming the Identity of Order, but only this, That there was no difference at all between *Biſhop* and *Presbyter*, wherein I will condemn *Ærius* as well as you. But as for the Identity of Order, 'tis well known that St. *Auſtin* is noted by *Medina*, a *Papiſt* Writer and others, to encline to this Opinion; but for my part I think the words quoted from St. *Auſtin* do not expreſs any Opinion one way or other to this purpoſe, but are only a Complement to St. *Hierom*, who was but a *Presbyter*; yet in humility St. *Auſtin* being a Biſhop, acknowledges him to be his ſuperiour in many things. But I deſire you to take notice of another very remarkable and moſt worthy paſſage of St. *Auſtin*, who tells us plainly that we are not to read him, or any other Author, ever ſo holy or ever ſo learned, with any obligation to ſubmit to his or their Opinions, unleſs they prove their Opinions by Scripture or convincing Reaſons. So then, had *Ærius* been declared both by *Epiphanius* and St. *Auſtin* alſo to have been an Heretick in this very particular of Identity of Order, yet they bringing neither Scripture nor any reaſon at all, but meerly a bare narrative of *Ærius* and his Opinions, not ſo much as calling his Opinion in this particular Hereſie, much leſs offering proofs for it; by St. *Auſtin*'s rule we may, with great civility to them and great confidence in the truth, ſtill affirm the Identity of Order.

But how will I anſwer that Objection taken out of St. *Hierom*, who, ſay you, was as great a leveller of *Biſhops* with *Prieſts* as any (and therefore whatever comes from him, you may be ſure is extracted from him by the powerfulneſs of undeniable truth) yet he confeſſes that *Biſhops* have the authority of Ordination more than *Presbyters*. A Man may ſmile to ſee this uſed as an Argument for the preheminency of Biſhops, which is directly againſt it: for St. *Hierom* having diſcourſt of the equality and Identity of *Presbyters* and *Biſhops*, and having brought many Arguments from Scripture to prove that *Biſhop* and *Presbyter* was only two names for one and the ſame Office; for a further confirmation hereof asks this queſtion, I pray what doth a *Biſhop* do more than a *Presbyter* except Ordination? plainly intimating thereby, that this could make no ſuch diſtinction of eminency in them above *Presbyters:* I beſeech you conſider, Do not *Presbyters* perform Offices of a higher nature than Ordination. *Presbyters* are ordained Embaſſadors for *Chriſt* to preach his Holy Goſpel for the Salvation of Souls; they are under *Chriſt*, Mediators between God and the People to make interceſſion for them; they adminiſter the Sacrament of Baptiſm, wherein the Children of Wrath are regenerated and made the Children of God, and Heirs of eternal Life; yea, they adminiſter the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper alſo, the moſt tranſcendent act of Religion and Chriſtian Dignity, whereby we are made partakers of the Body and Blood of Chriſt: And what doth a Biſhop more than theſe except Ordination, which being no Sacrament, ſure is inferiour in dignity to the other mentioned Acts, and therefore cannot elevate

vate them to a higher degree. Judge now, I beſeech you, whether this queſtion makes *pro* or *con*; Are not ſuch queſtions always tending to diſparagement? When any Man is boaſting his Power and Authority, ſhould I come and ask, What can you do more than others, unleſs it be in this or that poor buſineſs not worth ſpeaking of; would he not take this as an affront? Wherefore it cannot enter into my head that St. *Hierom* intended by this Queſtion to expreſs any ſuperiour Order above the *Prieſthood*, but plainly the contrary, *viz.* That Biſhops having no other power diſtinct from Prieſts but Ordination, this could be no Argument for a diſtinct and ſuperior Order. And now I deſire my *Reader*, if he underſtand Latin, to view the Epiſtle of St. *Hierom* to *Evagrius*, and doubtleſs he will wonder to ſee Men have the confidence to quote any thing out of it for the diſtinction between *Epiſcopacy* and *Presbytery*, for the whole Epiſtle is to ſhew the Identity of them. Before I chanced to read this Epiſtle, I was of the erroneous Opinion, that Biſhops were a diſtinct Order, but ſo convinc'd by this Epiſtle, as I was forced to ſubmit to a change: And I farther deſire my *Reader* to obſerve the various fate of St. *Hierom* and *Ærius*: *Ærius* is reviled as an Heretick for affirming this Identity of Order; *Hierom* paſſes for a Saint, and a great Doctor of the Church, though he affirms the very ſame as fully as *Ærius*, or any Man can do; and therefore it may be my fate to be reviled as *Ærius* was; but our Saviour bids us rejoyce and be exceeding glad when we are reviled for his *Names ſake*, (or for his Words ſake, ſure all is one) for great is our Reward; and ſo I proceed.

But there lies yet a great Objection made by our good Biſhop *Hall*; he tells us how that *Colluthus* a *Presbyter* of *Alexandria*, took upon him to ordain others; and that afterwards, in a Council of a hundred Biſhops in *Ægypt*, their Ordination was declared null, becauſe ordained by a *Presbyter*: From this and ſome other ſuch Inſtances the Biſhop would prove that the Order of *Presbyters* is not capable to ordain, therefore *Biſhops* are a diſtinct Order. I am ſorry ſo good a Man had no better a proof for his intended purpoſe. It ſeems he quite forgot how that the famous Council of *Nice*, conſiſting of above three hundred, made a Canon, wherein they declare, That if any Biſhop ſhould ordain any of the Clergy belonging to another Biſhop's Dioceſs, without conſent and leave had of that Biſhop to whoſe Dioceſs they did belong, their Ordination ſhould be null. You ſee then the irregular Ordination of a *Biſhop* is as null as the irregular Ordination of a *Presbyter*; therefore the irregular *Biſhop*, and the irregular *Presbyter* are of the ſame Order, of the ſame Authority, neither able to Ordain. Is it not moſt evident by this, that 'tis not their Order but Commiſſion that makes them capable to Ordain; ſure an irregular Biſhop is of the ſame Order with the regular: Is the Line of his Dioceſs like a Con-

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jurers Circle, within it he is a Biſhop, without it he is none. No, but within it he hath Commiſſion given him to Ordain, without it no Commiſſion, no nor to act in his own Dioceſs beyond his Commiſſion, which is to ordain only the Clergy of his own Dioceſs, and within his own Dioceſs. Can any thing be plainer? *Cellutbus* then being but a *Presbyter*, and under the juriſdiction of the Biſhop of *Alexandria*; his taking upon him to ordain *Preshyters*, was highly irregular and inſolent, and therefore moſt juſtly declared null. I deſire the Papiſtical School-Divines, with their manifold indelible Characters to obſerve here, how eaſily the Councils daſht out the indelible Character of *Presbyter* imprinted on the Souls of theſe Men irregularly ordained, they made a clear raſure, not one tittle of it left. And could they ſo eaſily cancel the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt? I leave my Schoolmen to find out how this rare feat was done. And I proceed to add a Canon taken from a Council at *Antioch* concerning *Chorepiſcopi*, much to our purpoſe.

When the Apoſtles had ſettled Biſhops in every City, with authority of ordaining and governing the ſeveral Churches or Congregations within the Circuits of thoſe Cities; ſome were very large, and therefore in proceſs of time, when more were converted to the Faith, and the Congregations encreaſed more in number, and at greater diſtance than the Biſhop himſelf could well have the overſight of; the Biſhop choſe ſome principal Men for his aſſiſtance, and dividing his great Circuit into ſeveral leſſer Circuits, placed theſe Men as Overſeers under him; and theſe were called *Chorepiſcopi*, that is, Country Biſhops, and were much after the manner of our Rural Deans. Thoſe *Chorepiſcopi*, Country Biſhops, being thus ſetled in authority to govern the Paſtoral Prieſts in their Circuits, took upon them to ordain more Prieſts when occaſion required, which the chief Biſhops took very ill at their hands, as a great leſſening to their Supream Authority. And to prevent it for the future, a Canon was made in the Council of *Antioch*, about the year 340. to forbid theſe Country *Biſhops* to ordain any *Prieſts*. Now I pray you obſerve, Theſe *Chorepiſcopi* were either really ordained in the Order of the *Chief Biſhop*, or not; if they were as full *Biſhops* as he, (as really they were) why might they not ordain *Prieſts* as well as he? The Chief Biſhop anſwers, Becauſe he gave them no Commiſſion. Whereby you ſee that the power of ordaining Prieſts was annexed no more to Biſhops than to Prieſts, unleſs the Biſhops received a new Commiſſion to ordain, as well as a new Ordination. If it be anſwered, That theſe *Chorepiſcopi* were meer Prieſts ſent forth to have inſpection only over other Prieſts; Then I pray obſerve, that theſe *Chorepiſcopi* being meer Prieſts, took upon them to ordain other Prieſts; which certainly had been madneſs for them to do, had they then ſuch a Belief of Biſhops as is now required. They might as well have undertaken to create Stars in the Heavens: For if Biſhops only have received a Divine

vine power from Chriſt and his Apoſtles to ordain Prieſts, he that hath not this divine power of Ordination, can no more ordain a Prieſt, than a Man without the divine power of Creation can create a Star, both are impoſſible in nature: from whence it muſt follow, that theſe *Country Biſhops* were directly mad in undertaking to ordain Prieſts, having received no ſuch divine power from Chriſt, his Apoſtles, or their Succeſſors: But if we take theſe *Country Biſhops* for ſober Godly Perſons in their right witts (as doubtleſs they were, being ſelected for that Office) they muſt needs believe that being Prieſts alone, they had power to ordain other Prieſts; and alſo believed, that the Biſhops having made them Overſeers and Governors in their little Circuits, they had alſo received thereby Commiſſion to ordain as well as to govern, and were as little Biſhops under an Arch-Biſhop, for ſuch really they were; ſo that I can't in charity cenſure them ſo much as of contumacy in taking upon them more then (they thought at leaſt) they had Commiſſion to act; I doubt not but the chief Biſhop would be wary enough not to employ any contumacious perſons. I conclude then, firſt, That it was only a meer miſtake, an eaſie and pardonable miſtake of their Commiſſion. Secondly, That in thoſe Times it was not thought an impoſſible thing for bare Prieſts, no Biſhops, to ordain other Prieſts, for then certainly they would never have undertaken it. And I confeſs my ſelf of their opinion; and can't but ſo continue till I ſee more reaſon to the contrary.

And I hope my *Reader* will ſee what weak proofs are brought for this diſtinction and ſuperiority of Order, no Scripture, no Primitive General Council, no general conſent of Primitive Doctors and Fathers, no not one Primitive Father of Note ſpeaking particularly and home to our purpoſe. Only a touch of *Epiphanius* and St. *Auſtin* upon *Ærius* the *Arrian* Heretick, but not declared, no not by them, an Heretick in this particular of *Epiſcopacy*; ſo that I my ſelf declare more particularly againſt him then theſe Fathers do, accuſing him of Hereſie in part of his affirmation concerning *Biſhops*, though not in every part.

I ſhall conclude this buſineſs by giving my poor Judgment drawn from the preceeding Arguments. I find in Scripture that the *Prieſthood* is a holy Order, into which no man is to thruſt himſelf unleſs he be called; I do not find that *Deaconſhip* hath an inferiour part in it, or *Epiſcopacy* above it, but that it is compleat and entire in it ſelf, and that it may involve many adminiſtrrtions in one and the ſame Order, and ſometimes many in one and the ſame perſon. St. *John* was an Apoſtle, an Evangeliſt, a Prophet, a Paſtor, a Teacher, an Ordainer (which we call Biſhop) all theſe Gifts he had by one and the ſame Spirit, and in one and the ſame Prieſthood. Chriſt himſelf was of this Order, *a Prieſt for ever after the Order of Melchiſedek*, that is, both King and Prieſt, theſe were his Offices; he is called alſo the *Biſhop of our Souls*: Was this in Chriſt a diſtinct and ſuperiour Office or Or-

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der to his Prieſthood, who will preſume to affirm this? And Chriſt told his Apoſtles, *As my Father ſent me, ſo ſend I you*; Chriſt therefore made them alſo *Kings and Prieſts*, as St. *John* tells us, *Rev.* 1. Our Saviour's Kingdom was not of this World, no more was that of the Apoſtles, Our Saviour's Office of *Prieſt* and *Biſhop* was one and the ſame, ſo was that of the Apoſtles; and they Ordained and ſent others, as Chriſt Ordained, and ſent them; there was no diſtinction or diverſity of Order in Chriſt and his Apoſtles, no more was there in thoſe who were Ordained and ſent by the Apoſtles, though there might be diverſity of Gifts or Adminiſtrations; all were not Evangeliſts nor Prophets; ſome had the gift of Tongues, ſome of Propheſie, ſome of Miracles, ſome of diſcerning Spirits; and ſome ſuch Gift I conceive they might have whom the Apoſtles conſtituted ſuperintendent Overſeers, Biſhops over the reſt, endued eſpecially with the Gift of Diſcerning and Judging of Men, and therefore fit to be intruſted with the Ordaining of others, for which there needed no new Order, but the enlargement only of their Commiſſion to Ordain, to overſee and govern thoſe that were Ordained. And theſe, as I ſaid before, being ſetled in this eminent manner over the reſt, were call'd by that name in *Greek* which ſignifies as much, and which we in Engliſh call Biſhop; and by degrees this name was wholly appropriate to them. In this order the Apoſtles left the Church at their death, and in this order their Succeſſors continued it (as in duty ſure they ought) from time to time near one thouſand five hundred years, without any interruption. Wherefore for any to alter this way of Government, or to take upon them to Ordain, not being choſen this way to it, they would be guilty of great raſhneſs and high preſumption; and I thank God, I am as zealous for the preſerving this Primitive way, as any Man; Yet I cannot by any means conſent to them, who would have Epiſcopacy to be a diſtinct Order, for the Reaſons before given; nor can I think the Ordination of a Prieſt made by Prieſts invalid, for though it ought not be done, (but only of neceſſity) yet being done 'tis valid, and certainly may without any crime be done by any Prieſt, by ſhipwrak or any ſuch chance caſt into a Country where there were none Commiſſionated to Ordain; in ſuch a caſe he might and ought to Ordain other fit Perſons for the Service of God, and Preaching of the Goſpel. For who can doubt but that the Subſtance is to be preferred before Ceremony? And as St. *Paul* approved of the Preaching of Chriſt, out of envy rather than no Preaching; ſo doubtleſs to Ordain out of order is better than no Ordination, and the Church of Chriſt be deprived of Preaching, Praying, and Adminiſtring the Sacraments, and all other Paſtoral Duties; ſo great neceſſity may well excuſe any irregularity: Yet where Order can poſſibly be obſerved, it ought to be, for God is *the God of Order*: Wherefore he that wilfully tranſgreſſes againſt Order, tranſgreſſes againſt God, and ſhall *receive to himſelf damnation*: for if to reſiſt the Ordinance of Man only in humane

mane and temporal things be damnation, much more is it, to reſiſt an Apoſtolick Ordinance in things Spiritual and Divine.

Concerning Deacons.

HAving thus ſtated and united the two pretended diſtinct Orders of *Epiſcopacy* and *Presbytery*, I now proceed to the third pretended Spitual Order, that of *Deaconſhip*. Whether this of *Deaconſhip* be properly to be called an Order or an Office, I will not diſpute; but certainly no Spiriritual Order, for their Office was to ſerve Tables, as the Scripture phraſes it, which in plain Engliſh is nothing elſe but Overſeers of the Poor, to diſtribute juſtly and diſcreetly the Alms of the Faithful, which the Apoſtles would not trouble themſelves withal, leaſt it ſhould hinder them in the Miniſtration of the Word and Prayer. But as moſt matters of this World in proceſs of time deflect much from the original conſtitution, ſo it fell out in this buſineſs; for the Biſhops, who pretend to be ſucceſſors to the Apoſtles, by little and little took to themſelves the Diſpenſation of Alms, firſt by way of Inſpection over the Deacons, but at length the total Management, and the Deacons, who were meer Lay-Officers, by degrees crept into the Church-Miniſtration, and became a reputed Spiritual Order, and a neceſſary degree and ſtep to the Prieſthood, of which I can find nothing in Scripture and the Original Inſtitution, not a word relating to any thing but the ordering of Alms for the Poor. And the firſt I find of their officiating in Spiritual matters, is in *Juſtin Martyr*, who lived in the ſecond Century, he relates, that when the Biſhop had conſecrated the Bread and Wine for the Lords Supper, the Deacons took it from him, and delivered it to the Lay-Communicants there preſent, and carried it alſo to the Faithful that were abſent, hindered, I gueſs, from coming by ſickneſs, or ſome other good excuſing cauſe. In the beginning when the Congregations of the Faithful were ſmall, the Biſhop himſelf delivered the Communion to them, but at length encreaſing to great numbers, it would have taken too much of their time for the *Biſhop* to have delivered it to the whole Congregation; ſo the Deacons were made uſe of as fit Perſons for this matter; for in thoſe days there was always a Communion in the Aſſemblies on the Lords-Day, and the Laity that Day brought their Alms and Preſents with them, which were delivered unto the Deacons to diſpoſe of to the Poor by the *Biſhops* direction, and therefore the Deacons receiving from their hands their charitable Benevolence, were thought the fitteſt to return again to their hands the conſecrated Myſteries

being part of their Offerings. But 'tis evident this was not yet come to be the general practice of all Churches, but only in *Greece*, where *Justin Martyr* lived; for *Tertullian* who lived in *Africk* some years after *Justin*, declares that the custom there was, to receive the Blessed Sacrament from the hands of the *Bishop* only, whom he calls the President, that is, whosoever was chief in the Assembly, whether *Bishop* or *Presbyter*: But yet I confess that this custom of the Deacons delivering the Blessed Sacrament, or at least one part of it, *viz.* the Chalice, by degrees became the custom in most Churches in after Ages; and so passing from one thing to another, in time they came to administer the Sacrament of Baptism, and at last to the Ministration of the Word, the business which the Apostles peculiarly reserved to themselves, and which the *Bishops* also for a long time reserved so entirely to themselves, as it was thought a great insolency for any, even for the *Presbyters*, to take upon them to preach in presence of the *Bishop*. *Valerius* Bishop of *Hippo* (as *Possidius* relates) was sharply rebuked by his fellow *Bishops* for suffering St. *Austin*, then but a *Presbyter*, to preach before him. I know sometimes it was suffered also in other Churches, but very rarely, where the Bishop himself was of weak abilities for the Work, and had some *Presbyters* under him very eminent. And so it was with Bishop *Valerius* and St. *Austin*, a Person of great note in those days. And thus you see, in process of time, how strangely things alter from their original Institution, the *Bishops* omit preaching, and become servants of Tables, and the Deacons for serving of Tables, step up into the Pulpit and became Preachers. But *Petavius* takes upon him to prove *Deaconship* a Spiritual Order, and brings us a more early Author for it than *Justin*, that noble *Martyr* mentioned before, *Ignatius*, who in his Epistle *ad Trolli*, calls Deacons (as *Petavius* conceives) Ministers of the Mysteries of Christ. Here I find that, which I often lament, Learned Men to go on in a track one after another, and some through inadvertency, some through partiality take many Passages of ancient Authors quite different from their meaning, as here, all following the first erroneous Interpreter of *Ignatius*. Whoever first translated this Epistle of *Ignatius*, sure this fancy of Deacons ran much in his head, otherwise he could never have found them here, for 'tis evident the word *Diaconus* in this place relates to the *Presbytery* newly before mentioned, telling the People they ought to be obedient to the *Presbyters* as to the Apostles of Christ; (then follows) *You must therefore please them in all things, being Ministers of the Mysteries of Christ.* Mark, I beseech you, *You must therefore*; Is not *Therefore* a Particle relating to what went before, *viz.* to the *Presbyters*, otherwise the Speech is very absurd. Should I say, *Presbyters* are as the Apostles of *Christ*, therefore you must in all things please the Deacons, were it sence? no, but just, *Deus in Cœlo, ergo, baculus in Angulo*; but to say the *Presbyters* are as the Apostles, therefore you must please them in all things, being the Ministers of the Mysteries of *Christ*, as the Apostles were; this is very good coherent sense; and so run the words of *Ignatius*;

Ignatius; but the weak Interpreter miſtaking the word *Diacanus*, ran into this error, and many learned Men without any conſideration have run after him. I grant the word *Diaconos* is often ſet for Deacons, ſpecifically diſtinguiſht from Presbyters; but 'tis very often ſet for all Miniſters in general, Apoſtles, Biſhops, Presbyters, as you find frequently in Scripture. St. *Paul* in one Epiſtle, *viz.* the 2d. *Cor.* twice ſtiles himſelf and other Apoſtles *Diaconous*. And I do the more wonder at the Interpreters miſtake in this place, becauſe by the following words, *Ignatius* here excludes the ſpecifical Deacons, ſaying, *Not the Miniſters of meats and drinks*. Now we know the ſpecifical Deacons were Miniſters of meats and drinks to the Poor, it was their proper work, for this very end they were choſen, and for no other, as appears evidently in the *Acts*; and therefore *Ignatius* ſaying, *Not the Miniſters of meats and drinks*, directly excludes ſuch Deacons, and the word *Diaconous* muſt neceſſarily be taken in the larger ſence, and relate to the Presbyters before mentioned, therefore pleaſe them in all things being the Miniſters of the Myſteries of Chriſt, not of meats and drinks for the Poor. Whoever underſtands the *Greek* and will ſee, muſt needs ſee the truth of what I affirm. But *Petavius* intoxicated with this ſpiritual Order of Deaconſhip, turns all this round quite another way, according to the working of his fancy. And ſo he doth ſome places of Scripture as little to his purpoſe as this. He tells us out of the *Acts*, that *Philip* and *Stephen*, both Deacons, were Preachers of the Word, that is a Spiritual work, therefore belongs to a Spiritual Order. I would gladly know who informed *Petavius*, that *Philip* who Preacht to the Eunuch, and afterwards went about Preaching to others, was *Philip* the Deacon and not rather *Philip* the Apoſtle, as ſeems to me far more probable; for *Philip* the Deacon was by his Office to reſide at *Jeruſalem* and take care of the Poor, thither the Alms of the Faithful were ſent, to relieve the Saints at *Jeruſalem*. But you farther urge, Surely *Stephen* was a Deacon; and let *Philip* alſo if you pleaſe, it ſignifies little to the purpoſe. Sure I can ſhew out of Scripture, Preachers that were in no Spiritual Order, neither Presbyters, nor Deacons neither, as *Aquilla* and *Priſcilla* his Wife too, and *Apollo* likewiſe, to whom they both Preached and inſtructed him more fully: ſure they did not ordain *Apollo* a Deacon, nor can I believe any of the Apoſtles ordain'd him Deacon, and ſent him forth to Preach before he was well catechized in the Word, he was not ſo much as Baptized in Chriſt, but knew only the Baptiſm of *John*; if not Baptized, ſurely not ordained Deacon, yet he prevailed and mightily convinced the *Jews*. It is in reaſon ſtrange, though in practice common, to ſee how Men wedded to an Opinion, think whatever they read ſpeaks to that, ſo Fathers, Doctors, all clink as they think. In the Primitive time all, both Men and Women, did Preach the Goſpel, taken in a large ſence, as St. *Peter* calls *Noah*, *a Preacher of Righteouſneſs*, that is, they endeavoured to inſtruct

all they converſed with, in the Faith of Chriſt and Godlineſs, for which many both Men and Women ſuffered Martyrdom. Wherefore though *Philip* the Deacon and *Stephen* Preach the Goſpel, it ſignifies nothing to the Spiritu lity of the Deaconſh'p, ſeeing that thouſands of Lay-men and Women a'ſo did the like. And ſo the Apoſtles laying their hands on thoſe choſen to be Deacons, ſignifies as little to this purpoſe. Do not we find that *Paul* laid his hands on the converted Diſciples at *Epheſus*, and they received the Holy Ghoſt, and Prophetied, yet none of them ordained either Presbyter or Deacon. And ſometimes the Apoſtles laid their hands on thoſe that were already ordained, both Presbyters and Apoſtles alſo, as on *Barnabas* and *Paul*, when they were ſent forth to Preach. This laying of hands was a Ceremony uſed on ſeveral occaſions, I need not mention more, they are obvious to any that read the Scripture. 'Tis evident then from Scripture, that the firſt inſtitution of Deacons was a meer Lay-Office, I will not ſay a prophane Office (as ſome too groſly and irreverently have termed it) but a pious and honourable Office in the Church of God, to ſerve Tables, to take care of God's Poor; but (as I have ſhewed) in proceſs of time it became quite another thing, and ſo different from the Original Inſtitution, as it made *Chryſoſtome*, and divers other great and good Men, doubt whether the Apoſtles did not conſtitute two ſorts of Deacons, ſome for this Lay-Office, ſome for Spiritual-Offices: Had *Chryſoſtome* conſulted only Scripture, he would never have doubted, nor dream't of two ſorts of Deacons, there being no mention at all but of one; but he ſeeing the practice of the Church (which he was unwilling to condemn) ſo different from that one Apoſtolical Inſtitution of Deacons; this ſo confounded the good Man that he knew not well what to make of it, and willing to piece Scripture and the preſent practice together, to put a new patch upon an old Garment, made the rent the wider, rending the Deaconſhip in two pieces, which of old was but one, only to ſerve Tables; which Office he that uſed well, purchaſed to himſelf a good degree, a good eſteem, and ſo it might be a recommendation to the degree of Prieſthood, though no neceſſary ſtep to it. And ſo we find that holy Deacon and moſt renowned Martyr St. *Lawrence*, was made a Prieſt, but continued afterwards in that ſame Office of Deacon unto Death, which he ſuffered in a moſt cruel manner, laid on a Grid-iron over Coals, rather than he would give up the Treaſury of the Church and Alms of the Poor, to the covetous cruel Tyrant. This holy Deacon *Petavius* brings to prove, that Deacons by virtue of that Order only, did miniſter in holy things, telling us, that St. *Ambroſe* mentions how he did diſtribute in the Lords Supper, the Blood of Chriſt to the Communicants under Biſhop *Xiſtus*. Whereas St. *Ambroſe* tells us how he Conſecrated the Blood of Chriſt, which plainly ſhews how untruly *Petavius* deals with us, and that St. *Laurence* was a Prieſt, not a bare Deacon, for neither *Petavius*, nor ever any allowed Deacons the Conſecration of theſe ſacred Myſteries.

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Wherefore seeing the Scripture allows Deacons, as Deacons, no more then serving of Tables for the Poor, whatever else Ministration is allowed them is by humane Authority, not Divine, and their Office or Order, which you please to call it, being about Temporal things must be Temporal, not Spiritual. And so I leave them to their proper Office of serving Tables, not finding in Scripture any thing more belonging to them.

Concerning Confirmation.

CONfirmation or some such thing is so necessary, that for want of due execution thereof, Persons extreamly unfit are admitted to the holy Table of the Lords Supper. I fear a quarter of the Communicants of this Nation do not sufficiently understand the true meaning of these holy Mysteries, the due preparation for them, the benefits, the damages, in worthily or unworthily receiving them: This I affirm upon experience, having, by way of discourse, questioned many both of low and high degree, where one would little expect such Ignorance. And by reason of this gross Ignorance in due preparing, and conscientious receiving this blessed Cordial and Medicine of the Soul (of power in it self to cure all our diseases if rightly applied) is turned into our destruction, and damnation of the Soul. For this holy Sacrament rightly apprehended, would strike a terror into the Soul and a dread of Sin, but Men receiving it without any regard into their sinful souls, the beams of Grace which this Sun of Righteousness brings with it, harden their dirty hearts, and make them afterwards unsensible of any horrid abomination whatsoever. And all this is occasioned by the want of some fit Person of authority, to examine youth of all degrees, ever so high or ever so low, before they are admitted to the Lords Table. For there being many poor ignorant Curates, many unconscientious careless Ministers, many over-awed by the superior quality of their Parishioners, some cannot, some will not, some dare not search into the requisite abilities of persons to be admitted. All which was prevented in the Primitive times of Christianity, when able and holy Bishops were elected, and therefore reverenced and obeyed in all Spiritual matters by the greatest as well as by the least. These diligently and publickly before the Congregation at set-times in the year, chiefly at *Easter*, examined all those who had been converted to the faith from infidelity that year, and all those, who baptized in the faith, desired admittance to the Lords Table; and upon approbation and confirmation of the Bishop, fit persons only were publickly Baptized by him, and at the Church door,

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aſſoon as Churches were built, where the Baptiſtery was placed, and then brought into the Church and admitted to the Lords Table: And no inferiour Miniſter did either baptize, or adminiſter the holy Communion, unleſs it were by the Biſhops order on urgent occaſions. Theſe things are very well known to the Learned, who are converſant in *Ignatius* his Epiſtles, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and other ſucceeding Writers. And in ſhort, nothing was done of any moment, as is plain in *Ignatius*, but by the Biſhops directions. But at length the number of Chriſtians growing great, and multitudes of Children daily Born, and an Opinion growing up alſo, that it was abſolutely neceſſary for the ſalvation of Children not only to be baptized, but alſo to receive the Holy Communion before death, it was impoſſible for the Biſhop to be at hand to perform all, or to give particular order for all: Neceſſity forced every Prieſt in his Cure to perform theſe Offices. Yet in proceſs of time the opinion of the neceſſity for Children to receive the Holy Communion before death, declining, and few or none admitted till the age of diſcretion, and the neceſſity of Baptiſm for Children ſtill continuing, the Biſhops ſuffered ſtill all Miniſters to Baptize, but reſumed to themſelves again the power of Confirming and Licenſing youth to the Holy Communion. And Biſhops only for a long time executing this Office, it grew by degrees into an Opinion, that Biſhops only were capable to do it, and that Confirmation was a Sacrament, and ſuch a Sacrament as inferiour Prieſts, ſuppoſed then alſo to be of an inferiour Order, were not to meddle with. What errors will Men, yea learned Men, carried along with a croud, ſlide into, not willing to ſtand in oppoſition with a multitude, eſpecially when countenanced by the Biſhop their Superiour. And then ſucceeding learned Men having in their Infancy ſucked in the error, continue it in their riper learned years, and endeavour to defend it as a certain truth; and at laſt it paſſeth for an Article of Faith, neceſſary to be believed. Thus have I laid out before you the true State and Progreſs of this buſineſs of Confirmation.

Now I pray conſider firſt; Suppoſe Confirmation to be a Sacrament, and to be adminiſtred by the Biſhop only, and none to be admitted to the Lords Table till Confirmed: How is it poſſible for a Biſhop of ſo large a Dioceſs, as ſome of ours are (ſome extended three or fourſcore miles, many forty or fifty) perſonally to Confirm half the Youth in a Dioceſs, if he duly examine each one, as is moſt fit and neceſſary. We ſee how this is performed in their Triennial Viſitations; not a quarter of thoſe, who are admitted, ever come to the Biſhop, and yet the croud is great: What is then done to thoſe that come? They are asked by the Biſhop, whether they believe and will perform thoſe things their God-fathers and God-mothers affirmed and promiſed for them at their Baptiſm? they anſwer, Yes, and ſo are confirmed: But what thoſe things are, whether they underſtand and can give a good account of thoſe things, not a word of this. Oh but the Curate

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who presents those Children to the Bishop, assures him that they are fully instructed for it; this is the thing we complain of, and desire to be redressed; that it may not be left to the discretion and care of every Curate, seeing what pittiful Creatures are by them admitted. And do we not see sometimes (the Curate desiring to please the fond Mother) Children confirmed so young, as cannot without a Miracle be of a capacity to understand those divine Mysteries. Besides, it may often happen that a pious Child well fitted for the Holy Sacrament, and perchance being weak, earnestly desires it before his death, yet must stay some years 'till next Visitation, or take a long Journey to the Bishop, for which he may want strength or means to support him. But in the Primitive Times the Bishops confirmed every year; their Dioceses also was very narrow, so that access to him was quick and easie; and the work was as easie to the Bishop, yea and easie also to the inferiour Curate to instruct and prepare them; for Parents and Masters did then according to their bounden duty (the great neglect whereof in these days will find some punishment at the last day) made it their chief care to instruct their Servants and Children from their infancy in the Principles of Religion.

You see how impossible it is for a Bishop in a large Dioceses and Triennial Visitation, to perform this necessary work as it ought; and therefore in the second place consider, how necessary it is for the Bishop to appoint some discreet conscientious Ministers, (as our Dean Rurals should be) in several Circuits to examine and license to the Lord's Table: For I pass it as granted that Confirmation is no Sacrament; and if it were, why may not Priests, not Bishops perform it? Certainly there is not one word in Scripture forbidding it, or any colourable pretence against it, nor can I discover the least ground of reason to forbid it; inferior Ministers performing other Offices superior to it, and certainly equal to it, though it were a Sacrament, which our Church denies. There is nothing in the World can be pretended, but that in the beginning Bishops did only perform it. To this I answer, That from the very beginning there were no other Priests but Bishops, as I have shewed you, and then Bishops did all other Ministerial Duties, Preach, Pray, Baptise, Catechise; and in succeeding Ages, when there were several inferior Priests, not Bishops, all but Confirming was ever transmitted to them; and to Deacons also, Preaching, Praying, and Baptizing, nay Baptizing tolerated in necessity to Midwives, (I would gladly see any such thing in Antiquity) and shall Confirming, the meanest of all these, be denyed Priests? You will tell me there have been Decrees in some Councils to forbid it: And will you be bound up to all the Decrees of Councils, without Scripture, or any reason for them? If once we leave Scripture, and hearken to the Doctrines of Men, ever so holy, ever so learned, ever so Primitive, we shall soon be wheedled into the Papists Religion, and many other Errors, which the Papists themselves now reject, as I have declared at large before, and

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therefore I forbear, saying more now to this purpose; but proceed to a third Consideration, What will be the best means to prepare Youth for the receiving the holy Communion in every Cure, and then present them to such as are appointed to License them.

In the first place, I humbly conceive it will be necessary to add unto the Catechism, a short and plain Paraphrase upon every sentence in the Creed, the Lords Prayer, and Ten Commandments, and particularly to explain every unusual hard word therein. For those general Questions at the end of them do not so sufficiently open the understandings of the weaker or duller Youth, as that they know how to apply those generals to each particular sentence; but many Youths who can most readily say the Catechism to a little, yet understand many words no more than if they were *Greek*, and scarce are able to give you the meaning of any Sentence in their own words: And although they have all perfectly by heart, as we say, yet have very little in their heads and understandings; and so a Parrot may be well nigh as capable of the Lords Supper, as some of those.

In the next place I must tell you, That I fear as much Ministers of the best parts as those of the meanest for this necessary work of Catechizing, lest both have the same effect, though they act extreamly different, the one talking non-sence, the other above common sence, both of them confounding the brains of the poor Youths, who understand neither of them. I have heard some Learned Ministers call the Youth together, ask a few Catechism-questions, which the Boys answering readily are commended and dismissed: And then begins this learned Man a profound Lecture, shaped according to his own large dimensions, at which both Boys and Men also for the most part gaze, as at a prodigious Monster of Learning; and perchance some of them say to themselves the same, that *Festus* said to St. *Paul*, *The Man is besides himself, much Learning hath made him mad.* Sure he doth not know where he is, not in an University-Shool of Divinity; but in an Assembly of weak and silly Youth (who must *be fed with milk, and are not capable of strong meat*) where it were better for him with St. *Paul*, *to speak five words with his understanding, that by his voice he may teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue*, or in such *English* as they understand no more than an unknown tongue. I humbly beseech these Men to attend to the Form and Phrase of the Gospel, and mark what kind of matter and language the Divine Oracle used in Preaching it, even to the learned Scribes and Pharisees, and to learn of him who was *lowly in heart, and came not to seek his own glory, but the glory of Him that sent him.* I desire them also to read the latter end of the first Chapter of 1 *Cor.* and the beginning of the second, and learn from thence to speak the Wisdom of God in the weak and foolish way of Preaching, to instruct and gain the weak and foolish, yet wise unto God. Really no Man that hath not made

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ſome experience can believe, how ſtrangely weak and dull thouſands both of boyes and men alſo, are in apprehending ſpiritual matters: ſo that a man had need to ſtudy much, how to fit their weak heads with a ſutable diſcourſe, and hath as much need of great patience alſo to repeat every thing again and again, and even beat it into their heads. I have obſerved that *Plato*'s manner of many ſhort and plain queſtions and anſwers to effect much; and likewiſe familiar ſimilitudes from things within their own occupation and knowledge. And now to encourage them to this toilſome work, I beſeech them to conſider, that the Souls of theſe weak ſimple ones, coſt our Saviour as dear, as thoſe of the Philoſophers, and therefore are as dear to him, yea it ſeems dearer, ſeeing St. *Paul* tells us in the place before cited, that he calls more of them to Salvation; and therefore they ought to be as dear to our Saviours Miniſters, and to be chiefly called and ſought by them; and then they ſhall be ſure to have their reward from this our lowly Saviour.

In the laſt place, I conceive it] neceſſary to conſider, what courſe may be taken to bring all to Catechiſing: for I have heard ſome Pious Miniſters much complain, that they have uſed their utmoſt endeavours, yet cannot effect it: and it can never be expected, that many of the Youth will come, unleſs compelled by Parents and Maſters; of whom many are ſo careleſs, many ſo covetous, as they think every hour loſt, which is not ſpent on their worldly affairs: ſo that the Parents and Maſters need compulſion as well as their Children and Servants. And conſidering how this neceſſary work of Catechiſing hath been neglected for many years paſt, it is much to be feared that the aged need it as much as the youth. But would Parents and Maſters well conſider the great advantages that would accrue to them, even in their worldly concerns, they would be very zealous to come themſelves, and both ſee and hear their youth Catechized, and bred up in Piety and Godlineſs: the want whereof hath bred that great undutifulneſs in children, that ſloth and falſeneſs of ſervants, which we ſadly behold in this degenerated age, And let me mention once again the ſtrict account Parents and Maſters muſt give to God for ſo great neglect to thoſe committed to their charge, Wherefore unleſs ſome fitter expedient can be found, I humbly conceive it would have ſome effect, if ſuch careleſs Parents and Maſters were not admitted themſelves to the Holy Communion, who were faulty in this kind: for thongh many of them are not very zealous of the Holy Communion, and could eaſily paſs it by, yet for reputation ſake they would not eaſily incur the being rejected; and doubtleſs many of them would be moved thereby, and the example of ſome would be followed by others, and ſo by degrees the number would encreaſe: and when Catechizing by this means begins to grow in faſhion, it would quickly be taken up by all. God be merciful to us, that Religion in many is chiefly for faſhion ſake! yet I hope by Gods aſſiſting grace, Religion begining,

though but in faſhion, would end at laſt in true Devotion, at leaſt in many, if not in all. However it is good that God ſhould publickly be glorified, the publick would ſpeed the better for it, though the private hypocrites ſuffer puniſhment in the end. God in his mercy turn their hearts that they may eſcape.

Of Church Government.

MY laſt particular which remains yet to be handled, is that of the Authority of Biſhops to govern as well as to ordain. And in the firſt place, who can but wonder to ſee men ſo zealous in aſſuming to themſelves the ſole power of Ordination, ſo much neglect, and even wholly abandon the power of the Keys, that of Excommunication, ſo high and ſo dreadful; which, though by great abuſe in latter times is made very contemptible, yet in the original inſtitution and Primitive practice was very terrible: A power to deliver men over unto Satan, that Prince of darkneſs, to take full poſſeſſion of their Souls, and ſometimes of their Bodies alſo, both being ſentenced thereby to the everlaſting flames of Hell; and likewiſe a power to releaſe penitent ſouls from the chains of darkneſs, and ſlavery of the Devil, and reſtore them to the glorious liberty of the Sons of God; whereby they are made Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. If there be any thing under Heaven fit to ſtir up the Ambition of mortal men, yea an ambition in Angels themſelves, ſure this is it. Who can forgive ſins but God alone? ſaid the *Jews* to our Saviour Chriſt ſwelling with indignation againſt him for this, though they had ſeen many divine Miracles wrought by him, yet this is ſo peculiar, ſo tranſcendent a divine act, as not to be offered at by any but the great God *Jehovah* himſelf. But bleſſed for ever be this great and gracious God, who by his eternal Son Chriſt Jeſus hath given this power unto men. As his heavenly Father ſent him with this power, ſo ſent he his Apoſtles with this power, ſaying unto them, *Whoſeſoever ſins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whoſeſoever ſins ye retain they are retained*: Wherefore if there be any thing in the Office of a Biſhop to be ſtood upon and challenged peculiar to themſelves, certainly it ſhould be this; yet this is in a manner quite relinquiſhed unto their Chancellors, Lay-men, who have no more capacity to ſentence or abſolve a ſinner, then to diſſolve the heavens and earth, and make a new heaven and a new earth, and this pretended power of Chancellors is ſometimes purchaſed with a ſum of Money, their Money periſh with them. Good God! what a hor-

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rid abuſe is this of the Divine Authority. But this notorious tranſgreſſion is excuſed, as they think, by this, that a Miniſter called the Biſhops ſurrogat', but is indeed the Chancellors ſervant, choſen, call'd, and placed there by him, to be his Cryer in the Court, no better, that when he hath examined, heard and ſentenced the Cauſe, then the Miniſter (forſooth) pronounces the ſentence Juſt as a Rector of a Pariſh Church ſhould exclude any of his Congregation and lock him out of the Church, then comes the Clerk ſhews and gingles the Keys, that all may take notice that he is excluded. And by this his authority the Chancellor takes upon him to ſentence not only Laymen, but Clergy men alſo brought into his Court for any delinquency, and in the Court of the Arches there they ſentence even Biſhops themſelves. This is a common practiſe in later ages, but in St. *Ambroſe* his time ſo great a wonder, as with amazement cryeth out againſt the Emperour *Valentinian*, when he took upon him to judge in ſuch caſes, ſaying, *When was it ever heard of ſince the beginning of the World, that Lay-men ſhould judge of ſpirituals*, (he means in ſpiritual things, not in temporal things, which by the laws of God and man belongs to the Lay-Magiſtrate) This was that *Ambroſe* of whom the other great Emperour, as Good as Great *Theodoſius*, Father to this *Valentinian* affirmed, *Ambroſe* onely knew how to act the Biſhop, and with all Chriſtian humility this great Emperour ſubmitted to the ſentence of this godly Biſhop denying him entrance into the Church for the cruelty acted by his Souldiers at *Theſſilonica* by his command; and upon his great repentance and pennance performed ſix months together, aud after publique confeſſion in the Church, was again abſolved and joyfully received into the Church. Oh my Great and Reverend Fathers of the Church the Biſhops, whom Chriſt hath cleaved to his high dignity, whom he hath made Kings and Princes, whom he hath called to ſit with him on his Throne, there to give ſentence of eternal life or eternal death, can you ſo tamely part with this prime flower of your Crown, yea the very Apex of it, and ſuffer the Lay-members of the Church to uſurp this divine authority? Or how can you anſwer it to the chief Biſhop of our Souls, if any one Soul by the ill management of the Chancellors ſhould certainly periſh? ſhall not his blood be required at your hands? But perchance ſome of you will anſwer, 'Tis no fault of yours, but of your predeceſſors, who gave ſuch Patents unto them, as by vertue thereof they exerciſe this power, will ye nill ye. 'Tis too true, and I remember when the Biſhop of *Wells*, hearing of a cauſe corruptly mannaged, and coming into the Court to rectifie it, the Chancellor Dr. *Duke* fair and mannerly bad him be gon, for he had no power there to act any thing, and there with all pulls out his Patent ſealed by the Biſhops Predeceſſor, which like *Perſeus* ſhield with the *Gorgons* head frighted the poor Biſhop out of the Court. Where are you Parliament men you great Sons of the Church ſo zealous for Epiſcopal Government, yet ſuffer this principal part of it to be thus alienated and uſurped by Lay-men?

If an unordained perſon take upon him to pray or preach, with what outeries and ſevere Laws, and with great reaſon alſo, you fall upon him; but if an unordained perſon take upon him to judge, ſentence, and excommunicate Biſhops themſelves, you calmly paſs it over, take no notice of it. You will anſwer me, The Biſhops themſelves paſs it over, yea and paſs it away from themſelves and their ſucceſſors for to gratifie their kinſmen, or their friends; or perchance for worſe, why then ſhould you ſtir in it. Truly in this you have reaſon, and the balme moſt wholly light on them, who do not uſe all poſſible endeavour and implore your aſſiſtance alſo to rectifie this great abuſe, which ſubverts the main Pillar of the Church Government, this is no Ceremonial matter, but the very ſubſtance of it, they ſtrain at Gnats and ſwallow Camels. For Chancellors to intermeddle in Probats of Wills, payment of Tythes, or any other temporal matters, there is no ſcripture nor reaſon to condemn, but rather to condemn, Biſhops, ſhould they interpoſe in ſuch matters for which they have no commiſſion from Scripture, but rather a prohibition from that ſaying of our Svaiovr, *Man who made me a judge or a divider over you?* but then it will be neceſſary that Chancellors have alſo power of Temporal puniſhments, and not prophane that high and holy power in ſordid earthly things; certainly a greater prophanation than to convert a Church into a Chandlers Shop; the Church is a bulk of earthly materials and holy only by dedication; the power of its Keys is in its own nature and original conſtitution ſpiritual and divine: If *Uzza* being no *Levite* ſuffered death for laying hold on the Sacred Ark of God to ſupport and hold it up, what ſhall he ſuffer who being no conſecrated perſon layes hold on the ſacred authority of Gnd to pull it down from heaven to earth? Let them conſider.

But let not the Civilians for this account me an Enemy to their Profeſſion, which no man honours more, and I heartily wiſh much more of our Civil matters were commited to their management and judicature. The Civil Law is that whereby moſt of the civilized World is govern'd, and if we will have commerce with them, 'tis fit we ſhould have able Civilians to deal with them, which will never be unleſs they have profitable and honourabl places to encourage them for it; all that I beg of them is, that they would contain themſelves within their own Sphear of activity, and not intrude into ſpiritual and ſacred matters committed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles to the Prieſthood. And ſo I beg of Prieſts, that they would not intermeddle in Lay and Temporol officer. In the time of Popery when Spiritual and Temporal affairs were all intermingled and horribly confounded, as the Pope took upon him Secular and Imperial authority, directly contrary to the Word and Conſtitutions of Chriſt, ſo the Biſhops and Prieſts under him intermeddled in all Secular Affairs and offices, and in this Nation Biſhops were frequently Lord Keepers, Treaſurers, Chief Juſtices,

Vice-Royes, what not? which is ſtrangely un-Apoſtolical and unlawful, their vocation being wholly Spiritual, as Men choſen out of the World, ſhould have no more to do with it, than of meer neceſſity for food and rayment. Wherefore to take upon them any Lay-Office, which muſt needs take them off much from the Miniſtry of the Word and Prayer, is doubtleſs very ſinful: For *Acts* 6. we find the Apoſtles gave themſelves continually to theſe, and would not endure to have theſe interrupted by that charitable Office of taking care for the Poor; certainly then they would have much leſs endured; yea, abominated to be taken off by temporal and worldly Offices. And on this occaſion, let me ſpeak a word to thoſe of the inferiour Clergy, who take upon them to ſtudy and practice Phyſick for hire, this muſt needs be likewiſe ſinful, as taking them off from their ſpiritual employment; had they ſtudied Phyſick before they entered Holy Orders, and would after make uſe of their skill among their poor Neighbours out of charity; this were commendable, but being entered on a ſpiritual and paſtoral Charge, which requires the whole man, and more to ſpend their time in this, or any other ſtudy not ſpiritual, is contrary to their vocation, and conſequently ſinful; and to do it for gain is ſordid, and unworthy their high and holy Calling. But *Neceſſitas cogit ad turpia*, the maintenance of many Miniſters is ſo ſmall, as it forces them even for food and rayment to ſeek it by other Employment, which may in ſome meaſure excuſe them, but mightily condemn thoſe who ſhould provide better for them: Whether this belongs not to King and Parliament, I muſt humbly beſeech them in Chriſts name ſeriouſly to conſider: I crave pardon for this (I hope uſeful) Digreſſion, and return to the Buſineſs of Excommunication.

This Sacred Authority of Excommunication being committed by Chriſt to the Apoſtles by them to their Succeſſors, was uſed in weighty and very ſcandalous matters, very few examples of it in Scripture: The inceſtuous *Corinthian Hymenus* and *Alexander*, ſcarce another clearly expreſt. The Apoſtles being fully guided by the Holy Ghoſt in all things, did exerciſe this power ſingly themſelves; but the ſucceeding Biſhops, having not the Spirit of that full meaſure, uſed the aſſiſtance of the principal Clergy in their Dioceſs, that the act might be more ſolemn and authentick; the perſon excommunicated, if he conceived the act injurious, appealed to one or more neighbouring Biſhops, who aſſembled together, and diſcuſſing the matter, either confirmed or reverſed the Act, as they found cauſe: And ſometimes the matter proceeded ſo far as to cauſe an Aſſembly of the whole Province. But each Biſhop, or *Præpoſitus* (as St. *Cyprian* calls him, and declares, that he) was abſolute in his own Dioceſs to exerciſe his power, and none condemned for uſing it, but only for abuſing it contrary to reaſon and conſcience; there were the only rules they proceeded by at firſt. Afterwards when Biſhops on this or other occaſions met in Aſſemblies Provincial

vincial or General, they made it divers Canons, which passed for Rules and Laws to govern the Church by, which doubtless are very good helps to bridle the extravagant passions of particular Men, very apt in this corrupt age to prevaricate; yet I cannot conceive them so far oblidging but new emergent circumstances may justly cause new and different Decrees; yet so, as every particular Bishop is oblidged for peace sake to submit to, or at least to acquiesce in the General Decree of that Nation where he lives. I said, They are not bound entirely to submit to the Decrees of former Councils, either Provincial or General; because, as I have shewed before, all their Decrees are humane, not Divine; and all humane Ecclesiastical Laws are alterable, according to the time and occasions by other General Councils.

As to the bounds of each Bishops Dioceſs, they were occasioned several wayes: The Apostles for the better spreading of the Gospel, Preach't it first in the principal Cities, which generally had great influence upon the adjacent parts, by reason that the occasions of most call them thither, and in these Cities they settled the chief Pastors of the Church, with power to ordain Presbyters and Pastors in other lesser Cities and Towns round about, as the Congregations of the Faithful encreased; and all those Churches that were erected, and Pastors establish't in them by these Apostolick Men in the chief Cities (I humbly conceive in reverence of their worth and Apostolick authority) were freely observant and subject to them, which afterwards out of custom, grew into a kind of right challenged by their successors. Sometimes the authority of the Pastor or Bishop of a City was enlarged according to the temporal authority of the same, it being the Metropolitan of this or that Countrey; for so we find in the Council of *Nice*, and other Councils, the chiefest and largest authority given to the Bishop of old *Rome*, because it was the first Imperial City, to *Constantinople* as the second Imperial City, to *Alexandria* as the chief City of that part of *Africa*, to *Antioch*, *Jerusalem*, *Ephesus*, *Corinth*, *Phillipi*, &c. where you see that though *Jerusalem* were the first City from whence the Gospel issued forth, *Antioch* the second City where the Gospel was planted, and where the Faithful were first called Christians; yet *Rome*, *Constantinople* and *Alexandria* were preferred before them, and had far larger Jurisdiction; so that it is a meer humane temporal matter, and Men have no farther obligation to it in conscience, than for Peace sake and Order, which in like manner obliges every Man to be subject to all Magistrates within their respective Jurisdictions.

There are yet two things more to be considered in this business. First, Where the Apostles first planted the Gospel in Cities with authority over the adjacent part, it was in rich populous Countries, where Cities were much nearer together than in these *Northen* parts, and the circuit of each City was much less in compass, so that the Bishop might well have the inspection

pection into all, and understand the behaviour of each Pastor under him, to admonish and chastise when there was cause. Whereas with us partly by great distance of Cities, partly by the favour of former Princes, several Towns being cast into one Dioceſs, they became so large, as 'tis impossible any one Bishop should have a sufficient inspection into them. As I said before of great Parishes so here of Dioceſſes, the Bishop knows not the names nor faces of half, or a quarter of them, much less their behaviour, he may have as well a part of *France* in his Dioceſs to govern. And as for their Triennial and Circuity Visitations, they signifie just nothing as to this, 'tis a meer money businesse to pay procurations to the Bishop, fees to Chancellors, Registers, &c. the Bishop indeed usually makes a Speech unto them, and a Sermon is preach't by some one of them, wherein perchance good Admonitions are given; but what knowledge can the Bishop by this have of their lives, or doctrine, or diligence? If he continue long there he may learn a few more names or faces, scarce any thing more. I humbly conceive this ought to be redressed, and the Dioceſs bronght into that compass, that each Bishop may be a Bishop in Government, as well as in Title and Authority over them But if the Dioceſſes be divided less, and Bishops more encreased, where shall we have maintenance for so many Bishops, some having too little already? When ever I shall see the Clergy of this Nation Congregated by his Majesties Authority, resolved in good earnest to reform and establish all according to the holy Constitutions of the Primitive Times, and come to this last mentioned, contracting the bonds, and in number encreasing the Dioceſſes, and Bishops for them, I'le undertake to propose wayes both rational and conscientious of providing convenient maintenanee for all; but I desire to be excused at present, least greedy Harpies make ill use of my zealous intentions.

And so I proceed to consider a second abuse in Church Government, which is, Exempt Jurisdictions, a thing altogether unknown to Antiquity and brought in by Papal Tyranny. The Popes at the height of their usurped dominion, taking upon themselves to be head of the Christian Churches, to be the Universal Bishop thereof, and all other to be but their Curates, took then upon them also, among other matters, to exempt from the power of any their under Bishops whomsoever they Pleased. And out of policy to have the more Creatures and Vassals immediately depending on them in every Kingdom and Nation, to stickle for them with Kings and Princes on all occasions, did for the most part exempt all Monasteries (who with their near Relations and Tenants made a great part of the Kingdom) from the Jurisdiction of the Bishop; they exempted also several Deans and Chapterss, several peculiar Chappels, several Arch-Deaconries, and other, and some of these were endowed with Archiepiscopal Jurisdiction in their Precincts, wherein they acted whatever they pleased, without controul of any but their Popeships: All which would have appeared a confused madness in

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Primitive times, when for any perſon to have been out of the Jurisdiction of all Biſhops, was to have been quite out of the Church, and would have been lookt upon as a Heathen and Infidel, according to the Primitive practice in all Ages, till Papal uſurpation. And therefore all theſe Exempt Jurisdictions are meer Papal, and if duely examined, will be found oppoſite to the eſtabliſhed Laws of this Kingdom ſince the reformation from Popery, as they are directly oppoſite to the Primitive Canons of the Church before Popery was known or heard of. And by reaſon of theſe Exempt Jurisdictions great diſputes and great frauds ariſe between the Biſhop and them, and the poor Clergy are ſo pild and pold by them both, that they are forc't to go in threadbare Coats, whilſt the ſeveral Officers of both grow fat and fair by fees extracted from them. Wherefore I humbly conceive the Biſhops, with the reſt of the Clergy are bound in conſcience to implore the Aſſiſtance of both Houſes of Parliament to Petition His Majeſty for the redreſs of theſe abuſes by Pious Laws, Setling the Church Government in the Primitive purity and authority, which moſt evidently was very great, and as greatly reverenced, Biſhops being the perſons to whom Chriſt and his Apoſtles committed the Souls of Men, bought with the precious blood of Chriſt, to whom be glory, and to his holy Spouſe the Church, be all Sacred Authority for ever. *Amen.*

A Charitable Admonition to all Non-Conformiſts.

MY beloved in Chriſt, you ſee how earneſtly I have pleaded for you to the Fathers and Governors of our Church, that they would graciouſly condeſcend to aboliſh ſome Ceremonies in the Church, that they may receive you into it; but yet I have no great hopes that they will hearken to me, you your ſelves for whom I plead, deſtroy my hope; for they preſently daſh me in the teeth ſaying, go rather and perſwade the Sons in duty to ſubmit to their Fathers, then Fathers to yield to Sons; and can you deny but of the two you are rather to ſubmit? You think to excuſe this by ſaying, Were it not againſt your Conſcience you would ſubmit, but you dare not for fear of diſpleaſing God, his holy Word forbids you; I beſeech you ſhew me in his holy Word any one clear ſentence, againſt any one Ceremony commanded in our Church; you ſee plainly I am not biaſt to any one Ceremony,

remony, and I am ſure I have read the Scripture all over ſeveral times, and I humbly conceive 'tis no pride of heart, if I think I underſtand Scripture as well as you; and for my part I cannot find any one condemning Sentence in Scripture. But you have the Spirit of God enlightening you, which I want; by this rule you may affirm any thing out of Scripture, and I ſhould be as mad in diſputing againſt you, as you in affirming it; 'tis madneſs for a blind man (as you conceive me to be) to diſpute of colours; therefore if you are ſo void of all reaſon, as to expect your bare affirmation, that you have light, ought to convince all gain-ſayers, I ſhall not trouble my ſelf or you, to gainſay you farther, but addreſs my ſelf to others, who ſoberly undertake to ſhew me ſuch Texts, as an unbiaſt Chriſtian willing and deſirous to ſubmit to all Scripture Truths (as I am ſure I am) may diſcover the truth of them; and I deſire thoſe ſober undertakers to ſhew me, any one ſuch clear Text to excuſe their non-conforming, as I ſhew them for their conforming: *Submit your ſelves to every ordinance of man &c.* 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. and, *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit, Heb.* 13. 17. Theſe are as clear as the Sun, that you ought to obey: Now if the Text you bring be not ſo clear but doubtful, I beſeech you is your conſcience ſo bold againſt a clear Text, and ſo timerous at a doubtful Text, is this religion or reaſon? is it not apparently wilfulneſs and faction? I beſeech you my Brethren, take heed of thus diſſembling with God and the world, or take heed of giving your ſelves up to theſe deluſions of a miſtaken ſpirit. Humility and Obedience are evident marks of the Spirit; *Learn of me*, ſaith Chriſt, *Math.* 11. 29. *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*: *God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*. Wherefore I I beſeech you, firſt, put on the Lord Jeſus with all humility, that he may give you the grace of his holy Spirit, to diſcern clear Truths, from conceited fanciful errors. Secondly, I beſeech you conſider, whether of the two it be not ſafer to erre in the way of Humility, then to erre in the way of Pride, which makes it doubly damnable, void of all excuſe (I ſay this becauſe you think or pretend to think our way erronious, not that I have any ſuch thought or doubt) whereas the Humble Soul hath great excuſe to plead; and if Charity cover a multitude of Sins, ſure Humility will cover ſome; a Soul clothed with Humility can't eaſily be diſpleaſing to our humble Saviour; but clothed with pride, can ſcarce be acceptable, but rather hateful, like the proud Phariſee, with all his enumerated Virtues; and my Brethren, 'tis moſt evident your ſpirit favours ſomewhat of the Phariſee, magnifying your own holineſs, and deſpiſing all others as Publicans and Sinners, and refuſing all communion with them; whereas the Holy of Holies, our Lord Jeſus, choſe chiefly to converſe with ſuch; really I can't but think your caſe very dangerous on this account only, were there no more to accuſe you of. Thirdly, I beſeech you to conſider the great miſchief you bring upon this Church and Nation by your ſeparation from the Church; You pretend to be the great

Zelots againſt Popery, and yet give me leave to ſay, Your indiſcreet diſobedient Zeal mainly brings it in; your ſeparation, and many following diviſions, have cauſed many to abhor our Church, and turn to Popery, and doubtleſs you are to give an account to God for the ruine of thoſe Souls; for I can never yield that you have any reaſonable and true conſcientious cauſe of ſeparation, but meerly miſtaken-reaſon and conſcience, which I much pity, but no way approve; and therefore I muſt lay the advance of Popery to your charge, to your ſeparation, for I am ſure 'tis the main ſnare wherewith they catch unſtable Souls, perſwading them our Church is not guided by the Spirit of Truth, ſeeing it is confounded by the ſpirit of diviſion, it cannot be of God who is both Verity and Unity. Now though it be well known to the Learned, that their Church hath neither Verity nor Unity, yet this is not diſcernable to weak Souls, eſpecially here in this Country, where their Church is under a cloud, and therefore their foul ſpots nothing ſo viſible as abroad, where it walks barefaced, but are here by their Prieſts either with great confidence deny'd, or with great cunning diſguiſed. Wherefore again I moſt earneſtly and moſt humbly beſeech you for Jeſus ſake, put on our Lord Jeſus in all humility and obedience, ſubmitting your ſelves to the Ordinances of thoſe Superiours and Powers which God hath ſet over you; and if out of meer humility and obedience you conform, though you were guilty of ſome error therein (I am confident there is none, yet were it ſo) my Soul for yours. that guilt ſhall never be laid to your charge by our moſt Gracious Saviour. and moſt mereiful Judge Chriſt Jeſus our Lord: to whom be all honour and glory for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.